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A

HISTORY

OF

The Christian Church

DURING

THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES.

BY THE REV. J. J. BLUNT, B.D.,

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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

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PREFACE.

A PORTION of the History of the Church during the First Three Centuries was delivered as a Series of Lectures during the Lent Term of 1854. It was, however, written as a connected History, the Author having always contemplated publishing it, as such, at some future time, when he should have laid aside the duties of his Professorship, and perhaps thus be at liberty to offer to the public those results of his studies which had been hitherto confined to the attendants on his Lectures. The period for the fulfilment of the design seemed to have arrived. Failing health having determined him to resign an office, the duties of which he felt himself no longer able to discharge with that efficiency and vigour without which he could not consider himself justified in retaining it, he had resolved to employ his first leisure in the preparation for the press of his History of the Early Church.

It had been his intention to add to it a chapter on the leading Heresies of the period, treated in such a manner as should present a general view of the obstacles, from false doctrine, with which the Church had, in her infancy, to contend. But he was obliged to relinquish the design; his declining strength rendering him no longer equal to the labour and research that would be necessary in order

to reduce so wide a subject within the limits of a popular History. He did not, on this account, lay aside his project of publishing that part of the work which was already completed. But it was not the will of God that he should, himself, carry his object into effect. Those, however, on whom has devolved the duty and privilege of fulfilling (to the best of their ability) his purposes, feel that they are acting in accordance with his wishes, in offering the History to the public, though in an incomplete state, and wanting that careful revision by himself which it would, under other circumstances, have received.

This last disadvantage has been, in great measure, remedied by the kind and important assistance afforded by two amongst his most valued friends; by the Rev. J. T. Austen, of West Wickham, in the preparation of the MS. for publication,—and, more particularly, by the Rev. J. A. Jeremie, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, in the verification of the references, and the correction of the press; an evidence of regard for the Author, and of affection for his memory, demanding and exciting the deepest gratitude in those who would have been quite incompetent, without their help, to effect the object they had so much at heart.

They humbly trust that this History of the Early Church may, by the Blessing of God, be rendered instrumental to the forwarding of those objects which it was the endeavour of the Author, through life, to advance,—the promotion of the Glory of God, and the edification of His Church.

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HISTORY

OF

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

The Foundation of the Christian Church.—Unity an essential Feature.—Indications, in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, of Church Discipline and Order not to be found in the Gospels. —Our Lord instructed the Apostles after his Resurrection in things pertaining to the future Government of the Church.

I PROPOSE to lay before my readers in the following pages a History of the Church in the first three centuries—a Manual, perhaps, I should rather call it—which, without extending to the length such a subject naturally seems to threaten, may suffice to put them in possession of the leading features, the prominent points, the events the most weighty, because the most pregnant with consequences, which present themselves to our notice during that interesting period of the Church's growth. For if the rise and progress of secular empires excites our curiosity and concern; if to investigate the germ and expansion of civil constitutions that have eventually attained to eminence and renown is a pleasurable task; how much rather to explore the unobtrusive advance of

that greatest of commonwealths, the Christian, which has already survived so many secular empires, and is destined to survive so many more,—that noblest of codes, the Gospel of Christ, which lies at the foundation of so many others, and which purifies and elevates them in proportion as they admit and appropriate its refining influence. In treating such a subject, however, after the manner I have proposed, I shall find it necessary to suppress, or review with rapidity, incidents not in themselves characteristic; such as, if entered into in minute detail, would only divert the attention from cardinal matters, and have the effect of dissipating the impression of epochs in the annals of the Church from which the general estimate of its nature and principles ought to be determined. Indeed were an author, when about to engage in a history of the early Church, to lay down his plan for a circumstantial, unbroken, continuous narrative, he would find himself baffled in the execution of it, for want of material. The documents out of which he has to gather his knowledge are incomplete; they are a chain of authorities, but with links occasionally wanting. The writers in most cases were not contemplating a formal account of the Church: their subjects led them to a partial development of it; but it was incidentally, and without any such express design. And where the historian happens to be met with amongst them, his range is probably limited to this locality or that; to the circumstances of the Church under this emperor or the other, according to taste or accident: and as it was meanwhile impossible for him to anticipate the kind of details we should desiderate at this distant date, so does he frequently pass them over, being things perfectly familiar to himself, and leave us to get an insight into them as best we may. Under these circumstances, I repeat, we have abundant stores of information on some particulars, a very scanty supply on others; and

the ecclesiastical author, however pains-taking and laborious, must be content, after all, with filling up his narrative from time to time by inferences, because facts may not be always forthcoming.

At the moment when our blessed Lord said to St. Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock *will I build my Church*," it was evidently of a future event that He spoke. The Church at that instant remained to be built; its foundation was on the point of being laid, but it had not been laid then. Meanwhile, Jesus ascended into heaven, leaving upon earth many so far converted to the Gospel as to be designated the Brethren; five hundred such being assembled in Galilee, to whom He showed Himself after His resurrection; but at Jerusalem the number of the names of the disciples was together only one hundred and twenty. Then followed the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost, and the three thousand converts made on that occasion by St. Peter's Sermon; and, after this, we are told by St. Luke, "there were *added to the Church* daily such as should be saved." The Church therefore was now no longer in futurity only, but in actual existence, called into existence then in one sense—for in another there had been a Church from the beginning—on this memorable day; St. Peter's address, poured forth under the strong influence of the Holy Ghost, laying, as it were, the first stone of the spiritual House, and so far realising the promise made to him by his Lord.[1] It is remarkable, too, and perhaps to be regarded as a further fulfilment of that promise, that as here, where Jews only, or Jewish proselytes,[2] had to be dealt with, St. Peter was the party employed to open to them the way, so when the Gentiles were to come in, the instrument of their initiation was the same. For

[1] Pearson on the Creed, p. 336; Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 318.

[2] Acts ii. 5. 10.

Cornelius was not directed by the vision to send to Jerusalem for St. James, or to Damascus or Tarsus for St. Paul[1]—destined moreover as this latter was, to be eventually the great teacher of the Gentiles—but to Joppa for St. Peter: a selection which St. Peter does not fail to refer to, with satisfaction, as well he might, on a future occasion, and in terms which possibly convey the notion that he considered such honourable distinction as the last instalment in discharge of Jesus' original pledge to him;[2] and it was to St. Peter, and no other, that the correlative vision was accordingly vouchsafed, in order to clear up his scruples—scruples which he felt in common with all his nation—respecting the admission of the Gentiles into the Church, and to satisfy him that they too were to be received into the covenant of Baptism. Here again, therefore, it might seem, I repeat, that our Lord was manifesting his call to be true, in the fullest sense, to his word, so that whether the walls of his rising Church were to be constructed of Jews or of Gentiles, and by whatsoever hand they were afterwards to be carried up, they were still to spring, in either case, from one and the same Rock, St. Peter. It may not, perhaps, be necessary to search further for the cause of this preference, than in the circumstances which first called forth our Lord's expression of it; the early faith of the Apostle which enabled him to penetrate a great mystery, and assign to Jesus his true character, before it had dawned upon the minds of his colleagues, marking him as chosen above his fellows for this service by God Himself, and entitling him to the designation of "*first*" amongst the Apostles, a title of

[1] Whitby; Pearson's Minor Theolog. Works, i. pp. 373, 374.

[2] Acts xv. 7, ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων. "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a *good while ago* God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by *my mouth* should hear the word of the gospel and believe."

honour and not of date, for in point of date[1] St. Andrew had the precedence. Else it would be natural to impute the preference to that force of temperament, that fitness for action, which evidently belonged to him, and, humanly speaking, qualified him, beyond any of the disciples, for high and hazardous enterprises. And, indeed, Eusebius actually calls him the great and mighty one of the Apostles, who, by his *courage*, took the lead of all the others.[2] "Whatever thou findest to do, do it with all thy might," was eminently St. Peter's motto. God has ever been wont to avail Himself of such instruments for working out his gravest purposes, consecrating such energies to his own ends. "He maketh his ministers a flame of fire." "Be strong and of a good courage," was God's injunction to Joshua; and, again, He repeats it, "only be strong and very courageous" (Josh. i. 6, 7). Such was Joshua. Such again was David; as brave and bold in the field, as he was zealous in the service of his God. Such was Saul; as resolute a persecutor of the Gospel once, as he was its champion afterwards, when the current of his life took a different direction. Such, we may suppose, from the surname of Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder, which our Lord gave them, were St. James and St. John; and such again from the patronymic of "Zelotes" attached to him, might probably be Simon. And to come to more modern times, it may be observed that the strong blood which in Lord Herbert of Cherbury discovered itself in daring speculation and adventurous feats of chivalry, when working in his brother's veins, under God's grace, rendered him most valiant in faith: and that which in Ridley's family had stirred the natural man to deeds of sanguinary strife with the rival neighbour on the borders, took in Ridley himself a different com-

[1] Matt. x. 2.

[2] Euseb. Hist. ii. c. 14.

plexion, and hallowed by another influence, animated him to an heroic death as a saint and a martyr. I venture to draw attention to these considerations, as not unfitting for an age when neutrality in the profession of religion is regarded by many with favour as the token of an enlarged and liberal view of it, and he is thought the discreetest advocate of the Truth, who is content to ask with Pilate —what is it?

But a further reason is assigned by early ecclesiastical writers for the Lord's selection of one, and only one of the Apostles, as individually the basis of the Church; namely, that He hereby expressed in a figure how essential a feature of it was to be *Unity*;[1] and certainly it is remarkable, that whereas the Apostles in general are elsewhere represented as the foundations on which the Church was to be built;[2] and the Power of the Keys is elsewhere committed to them all,[3] still Jesus, not without a reason, we may be sure, singled out St. Peter from among them all as the Rock on which the Church was to rest pre-eminently;[4] and gave to him, with a personal application, the Keys: and that whereas the speech which was productive of such wonderful effects at Pentecost was delivered by St. Peter, and by him alone, it is said that he, on that occasion, "stood up *with the eleven*,"[5] as though they all concurred in it, all took part in it, the speech the voice of all, and yet the spokesman but one;[6] and accordingly the moral, which the early Church finds in this singular cast of parts, may not be thought unadvised speculation, but a tradition descending from the first, a lesson emphatically taught by our blessed Lord

[1] Cyprian, De Unitate Ecclesiæ, § 3.
[2] Ephes. ii. 20.
[3] John xx. 23.
[4] Matt. xvi. 18.
[5] Acts ii. 14.
[6] Pearson's Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 323.

from the beginning—"See that ye fall not out by the way."

In tracing the very origin of the Church, the platform out of which it rose, we must of course carefully follow the leading of the Acts of the Apostles, and the succeeding Canonical Scriptures of the New Testament, making much, not only of whatever direct information, but even of whatever hints and suggestions those writings supply. The act, according to that authority, by which these first converts to the Gospel were admitted into the Church, was *Baptism;* "They that gladly received" St. Peter's "word were baptized." This is remarkable. No hesitation is felt, no debate is instituted by these inspired and accredited Founders of the Church, with respect to the first step they had to take. "Go ye, make disciples of all nations, *baptizing them*," was almost the last injunction of their Lord; and accordingly they now, at once, when the very earliest opportunity presents itself, carry that ordinance into effect; the number by which the Church is said to have been augmented that day, being the number, no doubt, who partook of this Sacrament—the only appointed entrance into the Kingdom of God.

We have now a band of baptized Believers in Christ established in a central part of the world—a nucleus destined to expand itself by degrees and occupy the whole of it. Meanwhile, let us endeavour to ascertain what are the movements by which this stupendous scheme, under God's Providence, is made to advance.

It is impossible to read the Gospels, and compare them, where they admit of comparison, with the Acts of the Apostles, Epistles, and the Book of Revelation, without perceiving that the tone is not the same in the two sets of documents: that the picture of the state of religion respectively presented to us by them differs materially: that as set forth by the Acts, Epistles, and Revelation, it

is far more developed than in the Gospels: that what in the one case is desultory, is in the other systematic; what in the one irregular, in the other organized: that words have acquired a fresh and peculiar force; parties a fresh combination; acts a fresh, and more precise, and technical character. Thus we have "the Lamb" now used as a distinctive name of Christ.[1] The "Angel" of a Church for its Superior or President.[2] The terms Deacon, Presbyter, Bishop, occurring familiarly, either now employed for the first time, or employed in a new or more definite sense. We have "Liturgy," "Liturgical," "Liturgents," "Catechists," "Catechumens," and words of that class, presenting themselves[3] as established in the nomenclature of religion, not perhaps bearing as yet exactly the same meaning as they eventually carried, but still affording a feature, either in their actual presence or in the construction assigned to them, which distinguishes the general phraseology of the Acts and Epistles from that of the Gospels, and marks the one to be dealing with the Church at a comparatively advanced period, the other, in its mere infancy. We have "the lot" or "portion," or "office" of the ministry spoken of, so as to suggest new ecclesiastical ideas:[4] "spiritual persons," another appellation, perhaps, touching upon the same string:[5] "the unlearned," contrasting with the clerical order.[6] We have specific appointments made of pastors to particular Churches, as to those of Crete, of Ephesus, as well as to others of Asia Minor; and a round of visitations of those Churches prosecuted from time to time. We have "rules," or "lines of things," or "limits" appearing,[7] as

[1] Rev. v. 6.
[2] Ibid. ii. 1.
[3] Λειτουργία — λειτουργικὸς — λειτουργὸς, Heb. viii. ix.; ὁ κατηχούμενος — ὁ κατηχῶν, Gal. vi.
[4] Κλῆρος, Acts i. 17.
[5] Πνευματικοὶ, Gal. vi. 1.
[6] Ἰδιώτης, 1 Cor. xiv. 16.
[7] 2 Cor. x. 15, 16.

though some territorial arrangement with respect to pastoral occupancy were now in force. We have the followers of Christ gradually designated by more and more distinctive titles; "the Disciples," or "Believers," giving place to the more familiar phrase, "they of this way;" that, again, narrowed by degrees into "Christians." We have the Sacraments, a new element, constantly administered, and various particulars connected with them carefully expressed. Much more of the same kind might be added, and will actually find its place in our narrative as we proceed in it: but this may suffice to remind the readers of the New Testament (for more than a memento is not wanted to direct their attention to a fact, which, on having their thoughts turned to it, they will at once acknowledge), that a marked progress in the aspect of religion is at once perceptible after the time of which the Gospels treat has expired, and when the Acts, Epistles, and Book of Revelation take up the history.

How, then, are we to account for this phenomenon, this rapid transition of the Gospel from a state of solution, so to speak, to a state of consistency and consolidation? Doubtless the gift of the Holy Ghost had been meanwhile sent down from on high, and had wrought a great change in the character and sentiments of the Apostles; opening their minds to understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament; unveiling to them the real nature of Christ's Kingdom; stimulating their consciences; increasing their faith; and bringing vividly to their recollection all that Jesus had imparted to them, and with a deeper penetration into its meaning than had been vouchsafed to them at the time He gave utterance to it. But if it be questioned, as perhaps it may, whether it would fall within the precise province of the Comforter directly to prompt or prescribe the details of the constitution of the Church, and to quicken it thus rapidly into life, it

may be open to us, perhaps, to trace the initiation of it to our Lord Himself, and to the instructions He was pleased to give during the period which more immediately preceded the day of Pentecost; whilst He committed it to the third Person of the blessed Trinity, here as in other departments of Revelation, to perfect the work, by reproducing in the memory of the Apostles all the suggestions of Jesus Himself, and enduing those, his ministers, with the temper and wisdom necessary for carrying them successfully into operation.

Let us then endeavour to decipher, as far as we may, the proceedings of our Lord during the mysterious interval which elapsed between his resurrection and final ascension; an interval, however, within which so little is positively recorded of Him, that it becomes doubly necessary for us to examine such materials as we have with all diligence, and, whether by inference or by actual evidence, endeavour to fill up the void.

St. John, no doubt, tells us, after finishing his own Gospel, that "there were also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one," he supposes, "that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Still, I apprehend, we must regard the Gospels as the substance of our Lord's teaching during his intercourse with the Apostles previous to his crucifixion: we must believe that, even if we had more ample records of his life during that season, such as St. John intimates might have been compiled, we should find them in character the same as those we possess; detailing conversations similar to those bequeathed to us, and not conversations totally different; actions similar to those there described, and not actions entirely foreign to them. Indeed, one or two incidents which antiquity relates of Jesus, we instinctively reject upon this very principle, that they do not har-

monize with our notions of Him derived from these memorials. It should seem, therefore, if we judge by the contents of the Gospels, that for some reason or other, not revealed to us, Jesus had hitherto abstained from entering with any minuteness into the mechanical means by which his Church was to be constructed, or into the peculiar functions which his disciples would have to discharge in accomplishing this great object when He should be gone away. Perhaps they were not yet prepared for these intricate details: the old bottles might have been burst by communications involving the prospect of such vast exertions, such endless anxieties, such persevering pains, such elaborate arrangements. Perhaps the eve of the outpouring of the Spirit was to be waited for till this step could be taken with safety.

We perceive that after the departure of Jesus, and even after the Holy Ghost had been given, the minds of the disciples opened very gradually, and even reluctantly, to some practical truths. Still it seems scarcely reasonable to suppose, that Jesus would withdraw Himself finally and for ever, leaving a work so stupendous on their hands as the ecclesiastical provision for the world's wants, and not acquaint them with the plan on which He intended it to proceed, the line of operations by which they were to realize and carry into act his commission. Certainly it is remarkable, that when Moses had to be prepared for the practical office of establishing and spreading amongst the Israelites the Law, he was admitted to more intimate communion with the Deity for forty days and nights previously; and that in like manner the disciples, the heralds of the Gospel, and few or none besides, should have had the privilege of consorting with Jesus, who now walked the earth in a more mystical form than before, and hearing Him "give these commandments," and "speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," for pre-

cisely the same period before their ministerial mission. What "those commandments" might be, what "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" might comprise, we cannot positively affirm; but we may conjecture, as I have said, that on the eve of his bidding them farewell, Jesus would be naturally disposed to instruct them in the immediate duties before them in greater detail; the discipline they were to establish, no less than the doctrines they were to unfold; God having done the same by Moses in the former dispensation—a conjecture the more probable from our actually discovering, as we have seen, that the disciples, immediately after his ascension, were carrying on their work in a far more systematic manner than they had ever done before it: laying down details with a precision quite unusual with them when formerly preaching in Galilee and Judæa, and evidently possessed of a stock of principles and rules by which to guide themselves, from whatever quarter derived, but little manifested as yet. Perhaps we may find some confirmation of the conjecture that it was during this interval of forty days that our Lord unfolded more minutely the instructions by which they were to be governed in rearing his House, if we consider the peculiar character of the few transactions which transpire in the course of it. During that period Jesus wrought one miracle; but the choice of that one shows that it was meant to be significant; and so it is considered by the early Christian writers. At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, when He summoned his principal disciples to attend on Him, and become partakers in his great work, it was by a figurative action, by the miracle of the fishes, that He called them,—a figurative action, the sense of which cannot be mistaken, since it is interpreted by our Lord Himself: "I will make you fishers of men." In the same spirit, after his resurrection, and when now they had to be prepared for a more

enlarged and laborious mission, He encouraged them by another miracle, the only one He now wrought, of precisely the same kind; and bidding them cast their net into the sea, which hitherto they had done in vain the night through, they were not able to draw it for fishes. Nay, the very number, an hundred, fifty and three, has been thought to have its latent meaning; and being supposed to comprehend all the different species in the lake, became itself an allegory. Again, it was now that Jesus charged St. Peter, still in anticipation of the task he was on the eve of commencing, over and over again, to "Feed his sheep." It was now that He showed Himself to James alone, the future Bishop of Jerusalem itself: an interview betokening the Lord's confidence in this disciple; and a distinction which could not fail to command the attention of those who elected him to that high function. It was now that Jesus gave the disciples their full commission, "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you," and, breathing on them, added, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained;" the fiat through which the consecration of the ministry has derived its force ever since. All these are incidents, not having respect to the personal holiness or personal edification of the parties Jesus was addressing, but to their position and office, as master-builders of that Church which henceforth it was to be their business to rear up in the world. And it seems not impossible, that a communication which our Lord is reported by Clemens Romanus to have had with his disciples actually on the very subject of Church discipline and orders,—a communication not reported in the Canonical Scriptures, and which must have been imparted to Clemens by those who shared in it, or by those who received it from them—occurred during this remarkable period. "Our Apostles,"

says he, "*knew by our Lord Jesus Christ* that contention would arise on account of the Episcopate. For which cause, having perfect foreknowledge, they appointed persons (over the Churches), as we have already intimated, and then gave direction that on their death, other approved men should succeed to their ministration."[1] Clemens being evidently under the impression that the organization of the Church, as well as its doctrine, fell within the contemplation of our Lord, and that provision was made for it according to his suggestions. The scope of these suggestions (if such they were) will be yet more fully distinguished by the results; by the next stage of the proceedings of the Church. And accordingly, having now endeavoured to explore the depths of its history, the crypts over which the fabric eventually arose—having attained a resting-place, and landed our subject on the level which the close of the first Whit-Sunday presents—probably the 24th of May, A.D. 33—a date much to be remembered; for if it be a season of just rejoicing when the first stone is laid of a parish church made with hands, and if the ceremonial on that occasion is impressive and solemn, how much more when the living stones of the universal Spiritual Church were first set, an Apostle himself the basement, and the Holy Ghost visibly taking possession, and consecrating the structure;—having arrived, I say, at this point, let us pause a moment, and then address ourselves to the progress of this new society thus introduced into the world, and destined to have such wonderful effects on it, developing, as well as we can, those passages in Scripture, and more especially in the Acts of the Apostles, which furnish for the present the chief materials for the further prosecution of our History.

[1] Clemens Rom. § 44.

CHAPTER II.

Apostolical Teaching, Ecclesiastical and Theological.—Epistles of Ignatius.—Early existence of a Creed or Rule of Faith.—The several Orders of the Hierarchy.—The Fund provided for the Church.—Liturgical Services.—The Holy Communion.—Marriage.

The brief yet pregnant account which we have of the conduct and carriage of this new society on its first establishment is this—"they continued stedfastly in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers." What state of things then does this intimation imply? What picture of the early Church does it exhibit, when held up advantageously to the light? 1. "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine." One of our Lord's injunctions to his disciples had been, not merely to *baptize* their converts (which in the present instance they had already done, instructing us that no efflux of the Spirit, even such as that at Pentecost on the parties, was a substitute for this Sacrament, which, and which alone, was ordained to place them in a new relation to God, cancelling their sins, original and actual), but also to teach them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them.[1] The compass of subject which this injunction embraces, for it is evidently wide, and the exact manner in which it was obeyed, for it is as evidently complicated, is in some degree matter for conjecture. Certainly several years

[1] Matt. xxviii. 20.

elapsed before the Apostles, or the companions of the Apostles, published their writings according to the canonical form in which we now possess them. There are passages in the Gospel of St. Matthew (probably the first of the four Gospels) which bear internal evidence of this—"Wherefore the field was called the field of blood, unto *this day*" (xxvii. 8), is a mode of expression which intimates a considerable period to have occurred between the incident and the record of it. "And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews unto *this day*" (xxviii. 15), is another to the same effect. Moreover the remark that "at that Feast the Governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner whom they would" (xxvii. 15), looks like a reference to a custom which had obtained some time ago, and was then obsolete.[1] During that interval they, the Apostles, must have inculcated the substance of these canonical writings, either orally or by documents, in some sort or in both ways. St. Paul himself, even later, speaks of traditions which he had circulated "by word or epistle;"[2] and the portion of such communications which was conveyed by word possibly involved those *ecclesiastical* arrangements which the very nature of the case rendered necessary, and which, we have already seen, not improbably were amongst the suggestions made by our blessed Lord during his forty days' sojourn upon earth after his resurrection. Certain it is, that if we argue the character of the Apostles' teaching from the topics treated of in the very early but apocryphal documents which profess to report it, such ecclesiastical directions formed a part of it. The *Apostolical Constitutions*, which are writings of this description, run in general in the names of all the Apostles; and it is scarcely to be doubted that they embody, to a great extent, various didactic Treatises put forth under

[1] Hug. ii. p. 11.

[2] 2 Thess. ii. 15.

the title of this or that Apostle's teaching.[1] Indeed, occasionally they betray this original, by adopting the phrase "I, Matthew," "I, Peter," "I, Thomas," "I, Simon the Canaanite."[2] Moreover, the paragraphs by which such Treatises are connected together in them are perhaps here and there discoverable by a keen eye[3]—Treatises, many of them so primitive that they or the like to them are probably alluded to by St. Luke in the preface to his Gospel, by St. Paul in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and again perhaps in that to the Galatians.[4] For though passages, in these Books of the Constitutions, constantly occur which clearly bear the stamp of times subsequent even to Constantine, yet a very large portion of them as unquestionably give token of a date the most remote, the heathen entering most largely into their several provisions: marriages with heathens, heathen festivals, outcasts of the Church joining themselves to the heathen, heathen tribunals, heathen evidence to courts, heathen processions, spectacles, markets, obstacles to the exercise of public worship arising from the heathen, heathen proselytes,[5] are all features which present themselves to us largely in the clauses of these Constitutions, not to speak of the depressed condition of the Christians generally betrayed in them, the smallness of their resources, the meanness of their rank;[6] so that on the whole it is above dispute, that with much alloy there is much of the most venerable antiquity in these remains; and as they represent the Apostles in the

[1] Διδαχαὶ τῶν Ἀποστόλων Διδασκαλία, Κλήμεντος, or Ἰγνατίου or Παυλοῦ; Vindic. Ignat. pp. 60, 61; Grabe, Spiceleg. i. p. 45.

[2] Apostol. Constit. ii. c. 24; iii. c. 19; viii. c. 27.

[3] Ibid. viii. c. 3, and Vindic. Ignat. i. 62.

[4] 2 Thess. ii. 2; Gal. i. 6.

[5] Apostol. Constit. i. c. 10; ii. c. 6, c. 21, c. 45, c. 46, c. 61, c. 62; viii. c. 34; vi. c. 5; vii. c. 37.

[6] Ibid. iv. c. 9; viii. c. 23; iv. c. 1; viii. c. 32.

character of ecclesiastical as well as theological teachers, it would seem to be at any rate a very primitive tradition that their instruction did actually partake of both these elements. Nor is this all the external evidence which tends to the same conclusion. If in the Epistles of Ignatius, the argument for a precise ecclesiastical constitution is more distinct and indisputable than in some other of the earliest Fathers, insomuch as to have excited a suspicion against the genuineness of the text, it must be ever borne in mind that the works of very few of the sub-apostolical Fathers remain to us with which to compare these Epistles;[1] that had we been in possession of them all, and had it been still found that Ignatius was singular in his mode of speaking on this question, there would have been some weight in the objection, whereas it is highly probable that had we more of these authors, some or other of them would be discovered to express themselves as he does; that Clemens Alexandrinus indicates as much by letting drop such a casual paragraph (for casual it is) as the following: "the ranks in the Church here upon earth, of bishops, priests, deacons, are imitations of the angelical glory, and the economy above;"[2] that certainly Cyprian, who was no great deal later in date, is not a whit less emphatic on the subject than Ignatius; and that Tertullian gives us reason to believe, that had he not been carried into opposition to the Church by his Montanism, he would have been as positive upon it (which indeed he is, but as *uniformly* positive upon it) as Ignatius. But it may be suspected that the minds of men in these days are not duly prepared for a candid estimate of such an author as Ignatius. It is no libel on our own generation to say that it is not conversant with the primitive ecclesiastical writings which have survived, and is unconscious of the spirit which

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 36. | [2] Stromat. vi. p. 667.

characterises them, a spirit which renders those who have studied them with care far from indisposed to accept the Epistles of Ignatius as genuine, and as containing nothing inconsistent with the age in which they profess to have been published. It will not do to pass at once from the Canonical Scriptures, construed perhaps according to Calvin, and a school which sets antiquity at defiance, to the Epistles of Ignatius, and perceiving there no such loose ecclesiastical principles as we had accustomed ourselves to hold for true, but, on the contrary, a stringent constitution for the Church, turn in heat and haste on the substance of the text, and deny its integrity. The tone of the Epistles of Ignatius does not differ from that of the Acts, the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and the Revelation, so much as the tone of these latter differs from that of the Gospels. The authority of these writings, notwithstanding modern criticism, rests where Bishop Pearson's masterly Dissertation left it, as I shall take another opportunity of showing; but for our present purpose there is no need to affirm even this; we can afford to make ample concessions. Under any circumstances it must be admitted, that the general character of the Epistles now in our hands is similar to that of the Epistles known to Eusebius, that is to say, that ecclesiastical as well as theological topics found a leading place in them. The language in which that historian speaks of them, and the quotations he makes from them, lead us to this result; and yet he describes them as "the *tradition of the Apostles*," informing us that in them Ignatius exhorted the Churches "to hold fast the tradition of the Apostles, the which, for its greater security, he put down with pen and ink, bearing written testimony to it;"[1] so that evidently Eusebius, a writer of the fourth century, a very diligent investigator of the documents

[1] Eccles. Hist. iii. c. 36.

then existing in the Church, far more in number than have come down to our times, and a searcher into the trustworthy traditions of the Church by profession and pursuit, makes no doubt that these topics constituted a part of the Apostles' teaching; that these topics were an ingredient in that which is designated "the teaching of the Apostles," in the important passage of the Acts we are canvassing; and that it would be an undue limitation of the phrase to explain it of articles of faith only, theological propositions and no other. The testimony of Clemens Romanus, than which nothing can be more unexceptionable, has the same tendency; his Epistle clearly represents the Apostles themselves as laying down rules with regard to the episcopal succession; rules which were to take effect when they should be no more,[1] and which actually did take effect, it being imputed to the Corinthians in that Epistle as a very blameworthy proceeding, that by their factious quarrels the order of this arrangement, established on such authority, had been disturbed, and the clergy chased away who had been created under it.

But we are far from having exhausted the subject of the apostolical doctrine or teaching, and the interpretation the phrase admits as used in the passage of the Acts to which our attention is directed. Indeed, we have as yet done little more than prove that it may be fairly considered to have comprised, in general, ecclesiastical as well as theological instruction. To come, then, more to particulars. The Apostles appear to have promoted the stedfastness of their congregations by communicating to them some *Confession of Faith*, some summary of the chief articles of it, to be learned by the children, affirmed at Baptism and in the assembly, and borne constantly in mind on all occasions. We have ample evidence of such provision.

[1] Clemens Rom. § 44.

The heresies, which eventually, if not immediately, sprang up in the Church, were the means of putting us in possession of evidence. We find the champions of the Church of those days appealing to a Creed, a Rule of Faith, as a standard by which those obliquities would be exposed; the authority of which standard, according to them, was derived from its indisputable antiquity; indeed from its apostolical origin. Tertullian, after adducing the main features of such a Creed, describes it, as "a rule which had come down from the beginning of the Gospel."[1] And Irenæus, a still earlier writer, after doing the same thing, asserts, that "it had been received from the Apostles, and from their disciples," and had been "dispersed over the whole world."[2] I have said that in these extremely early notices of the existence of a Creed, it is the substance of it that is given, not the very terms. It is not easy to assign with confidence a cause for the suppression of the form itself; but certain it is that a cause there must have been which sufficed, for though the references to such an instrument are, as we have seen, so numerous in the most primitive Fathers—indeed those references might be multiplied to a great extent—as to leave no manner of doubt on our minds that a Creed was actually forthcoming, and might have been produced had there been a reason for its production, yet the matter of it is all that is put on paper for several centuries: even though used in the congregation,[3] it was not generally divulged in its naked form out of it; and though we do eventually arrive at it by the time of Ruffinus and Augustin, that is, towards the end of the fourth century, yet even then the same apprehensions respecting its unreserved publication appear to have prevailed: Ruffinus

[1] Adv. Prax. § 2, p. 501.
[2] Irenæus, i. c. 10, § 1.
[3] See Origen contra Cels. v. p. 242, and Ruffinus, Expositio in Symbolum, § 3.

comparing it to the pass-word which the officer gave his troops; and as that, when kept a secret, enabled him to test a stranger of whom they might be suspicious, so the believer, by the exclusive possession of this Creed, might challenge and detect the infidel;[1] and Augustin, when discussing the same formulary, directly exhorting his congregation to lodge it in their memories, but by no means commit it to writing, quoting the text of Jeremiah (xxxi. 33), "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."[2] Possibly the Church shrank from exposing the mysteries of the faith to the profane gaze of the ignorant populace. The reason which Sozomen assigns for not inserting the Nicene Creed in his History is the following, "that probably some of the uninitiated might read his book"—*οὐ γὰρ ἀπεικὸς καὶ τῶν ἀμυήτων τινὰς τῇδε τῇ βίβλῳ ἐντυχεῖν.*[3] Possibly, in an age when persecution of the Christians was from time to time breaking out with sanguinary activity, there was a fear amongst them of having any part of their religious services in a shape that might be produced against them as testimony; and thus always on their guard, they treasured them in their hearts, which the frequent recurrence of their seasons of worship would enable them to do effectually; for it may be observed, that precisely the same mystery overhangs the origin of the primitive Liturgies in general, as envelopes that of the Creed. Unquestionable as are the evidences of the existence of a set service in the sub-apostolical Church, the earliest we possess of the existence of a *written* service is in the account of the persecution of Dio-

[1] Ruffinus Expositio, § 2.

[2] Augustin, Sermo ccxii. In Traditione Symboli, v. p. 938, Benedict. Ed.

[3] Hist. Eccles. i. c. 20. The passage of which this sentence is a part, is probably corrupt; but the general meaning of it is to the effect I have said. It is quoted by Mr. Newman in his History of "the Arians," p. 150.

cletian about the year 303, when Eusebius tells us he saw "*sacred* writings," as well as "divine," consigned to the flames.[1] Moreover, it is clear from Pliny's Letter that there was a difficulty in substantiating any definite charges against the Christians; a difficulty to which the absence of all records of their form of worship would greatly contribute. And it would appear, I think, from a hint in the Apology of Tertullian, that the Scriptures themselves seldom fell into the hands of the heathen, except by accident.[2] But however this may be, the manner in which the Apostles' Creed is even now at length introduced to us, argues its extreme antiquity. We have even now, at the date I have said, both in Ruffinus and Augustin, to gather the several clauses of it, clause by clause, out of their exposition of it; the very cast and character of the Treatises evidently implying that it was no new element of the Church's teaching which they were engaged upon, but one which had been, time out of mind, familiar to Christians even then; Ruffinus, indeed, expressly saying that the tradition respecting it was, that the Apostles, before their dispersion over the world, anxious to secure the universal identity of their doctrine when conference might be no longer easy, drew up by common accord this formulary of faith, and established it as the rule for believers.[3] Whatever credit we assign to this tradition, it is obvious that, put upon record as it is in the fourth century, it proves beyond a doubt, the origin of the Creed to have ever been considered most remote, lost in antiquity; and still further tends to confirm the notions already expressed, though derived from other premises, and under the contemplation of the Apostles' teaching in another aspect of it, that it much more closely resembled that of the

[1] Eccl. Hist. viii. c. 2.
[2] Apolog. § 31.
[3] Ruffinus, Expositio, § 2.

Church when fully produced and standing in the clear light of day, than is often supposed by those who have not taken the pains to look below the surface.

But there is still much more to be said on the subject of this teaching or doctrine of the Apostles, and the wide interpretation it admits, by which the early Church was held together—on the frame-work of the Church as laid down by them—the carcase of the ark. Thus the several orders of the hierarchy resolve themselves into a primary institution under the Apostles' hands, even as perceptible in those writings—even there the three ranks discover themselves. Timothy was set by St. Paul in a position of authority, even over those who had a control of their own over the flock; for Timothy, on the one hand, was commissioned to receive an accusation against an elder, and, if necessary, to rebuke him; and yet the elder, on the other hand, was commissioned on his part to bear rule;[1] while the deacon, as his very name indicates, was appointed only to minister or serve, and was not to be raised to a higher grade or "good degree," till he had given proof that he was fit for it; Timothy, meanwhile, deriving his superiority from no advantage in age, for he was so young that he is cautioned not to allow himself on that account to be despised. Titus is in the same case with respect to years, yet he, too, is commissioned "to rebuke with all authority;"[2] and both the one and the other are entrusted with the power of Ordination;[3] an exclusive power, for the manner in which the exercise of it is enjoined them, shows that the character of the clergy lay in their hands by the cautious choice which they should make, and the previous examination they should institute; a provision which would be entirely defeated if the clergy in their respective dioceses might be self-

[1] 1 Tim. v. 1. 17. 19.
[2] Tit. ii. 15.
[3] 1 Tim. v. 22; Tit. i. 5.

appointed or appointed by other indifferent parties: an exclusive power, too, which was not to be confined to them, but to descend in like manner to those who should succeed to their places; for Timothy was to "keep the commandment," that is, I apprehend, the instructions he had just been receiving from St. Paul, "until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;"[1] an injunction which would imply that they were to be binding on future Bishops to the end of time. And in point of fact, the manner in which the bishop or angel of each Church is referred to in the Revelation, argues that his position was then thoroughly established; the Epistles of Ignatius scarcely indicating this fact more conclusively. Again, the Canons respecting "Orders" reflect the language of the apostolical times and the apostolical writings, and as St. Paul, we have seen, speaks of the deacon gaining for himself by the satisfactory discharge of that office a "good degree" (*βαθμὸν καλὸν*), so the early Canons of the Church speak of a bishop being rejected "from his degree," of the clergy being allowed their "several degrees," of the bishops and clergy being deposed "from their several degrees."[2]

Again, the Letters Commendatory (*αἱ συστατικαὶ ἐπιστολαὶ*) of which the early Canons speak, or epistles by which the bearers, when leaving their own congregations, are recommended to distant churches as guarantees of character,[3] find the initiative still in the apostolical age and apostolical practice. "Do we begin again," says St. Paul, "to commend ourselves (*συνιστάνειν*), or need we, as some others, *epistles of commendation* to you, or letters of commendation from you (*συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν*)?"[4] and several instances occur in the Canonical Scrip-

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 14.

[2] Τοῦ *βαθμοῦ*, Concil. Ephes. Canon. i. iii. vi.

[3] Concil. Chalcedon, Routh, 408; Canon Apostol. x. xxvi.

[4] 2 Cor. iii. 1.

tures of the actual use of such letters. Apollos received them from the Church of Ephesus when he was about to go to Achaia; and St. Paul probably supplied Phœbe with such a document when she was leaving the Church of Cenchrea for Rome.[1]

Again, the Canons respecting behaviour in the Church, which are of apostolical origin, are in character quite similar to those of a later age of it; the women were to be in silence, according to St. Paul,[2] so they were to be according to the Canon of the "Constitutions;"[3] the worshippers were to be provided with seats in the congregation, according to St. James, the poor not to be neglected in this arrangement,[4] so was it according to the same "Constitutions;"[5] the building itself, or the room at least, it may be further observed, a church in futurity; the distinction between the house and the church already seeming to be drawn in the Epistle to the Corinthians,—"have ye not *houses* to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the *church* of God (1 Cor. xi. 22)?" for this application of the term church can hardly be counted premature when St. John is recorded to have worn some article of dress characteristic of the priesthood[6]—such chamber gradually ripening into that of which mention is made in the Philopatris, at once highly decorated and yet concealed from notice; the latter a fact proving that the Gospel was not yet tolerated, and the patent erection of temples to God allowed—that the chamber was a transitional church. Again, the various Canons against teachers of heresy with which the Church eventually armed itself were not the inventions of a later age, but were, substantially at least, the ordinances of the Apostles,

[1] Acts xviii. 27; Rom. xvi. 1, 2.
[2] 1 Tim. ii. 11.
[3] Apostol. Constit. iii. c. 6.
[4] James ii. 2, 3, 4.
[5] Apostol. Constit. iii. c. 58.
[6] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 31.

as Scripture witnesses. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject,"[1] has all the precision of a more modern Canon on the same subject, and however briefly expressed, no doubt conveyed to the persons concerned in the execution of it an accurate knowledge of what they were to do; indeed such phraseology evidently implies the existence of a society in complete organization, and would be felt to be inappropriate under any other supposition. Again, the Canon respecting the provision to be made for the widows of the Church—one of a whole class of Canons promulgated by the Apostle—is as precise as any directed to the same object at a future period. The widow was not to be less than threescore years of age, she was to have been the wife of one man, she was to have brought up children, she was to have none of those children able to minister to her nor yet nephews, she was to be well reported of for good works.[2] And, indeed, the whole fiscal apparatus of the Church, as it became developed in the lapse of time, and as we find it embodied in various Constitutions and Canons, was merely a superstructure naturally rising upon the lines laid down during the life of the Apostles themselves. Thus it was by apostolical appointment that a collection was made on the first day of the week in the churches for the wants of the community. It is expressly enjoined by St. Paul on the Corinthians and on the Galatians,[3] and it was not possible that such a regulation should be long confined to any particular locality when the object was a general one; and indeed we know of a certainty that by the time of Justin Martyr the custom was universal.[4] Of this exchequer the Apostles had, in the first instance, the direction, regulated no doubt, in

[1] Tit. iii. 10.
[2] 1 Tim. v. 9, 10, and see Apostol. Constit. b. iii. c. 1, 2, 3.
[3] 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.
[4] Apolog. § 67.

the law of its distribution, by the territorial limits of the several communities out of which it arose,[1] but inviting the inspection of the Church at large to all their proceedings; certain at least it is, that St. Paul shows himself solicitous to guard against all jealousy on the part of the Corinthians as to the application of their collection for the saints of Jerusalem, by requesting them to join others with him to convey it to its destination.[2] Still, whenever a remittance of this kind was made, it was to the elders of the place that it was delivered,[3] the Church authorities being the legitimate channel through which it passed. Out of this fund the various necessities of the Church were provided for; the clergy were paid out of it. When St. Paul waives his own claim upon it, as he does in the particular case of Corinth, for peculiar reasons, he intimates that he was waiving a *right;* a right which appertained to the clergy generally, and of which they generally availed themselves,—"or I *only* and Barnabas, have not we the power to forbear working?"[4] Nay, of some of the churches he did receive "wages," for so he calls the stipend, and not alms.[5] Accordingly, care was even then to be taken, as it has been since, that the endowment of the Church should not be made a bait to tempt idle and mercenary men into the ministry; neither bishop nor deacon was to be "greedy of filthy lucre;" the caution no less requisite then than now. On the other hand, "the elders that ruled well were to be counted worthy of *double honour*," that is, of double pay; the word (τιμὴ) rendered "honour," having not unfrequently this sense; and the reason assigned for this distinction, which immediately follows, namely, that we "are not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," seems to determine the

[1] Acts iv. 34, 35.
[2] 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4.
[3] Acts xi. 30.
[4] 1 Cor. ix. 6.
[5] 2 Cor. xi. 8.

meaning to be appropriated to it in this case. The same regulation appears to have applied to the widows of the Church: "*Honour* widows that are widows indeed;"[1] let the allowance paid to such widows out of the treasury of the Church be large and liberal. Out of this same fund the expense of the messengers circulating amongst the Churches (and many such there were) had no doubt to be defrayed, visitations, and various ecclesiastical demands, not the less numerous, perhaps, on account of the novelty of the crisis, and the machinery having now to be created and put in motion for the first time. It was probably with a view to relieve the pressure upon this fund, independently of the merit of the virtue itself, that a spirit of hospitality is so much encouraged in Scripture, as well as in early ecclesiastical antiquity. A bishop was to be given to hospitality; and this feature in the character of a good bishop asserted in the injunctions to Timothy, is repeated in those to Titus;[2] the widow to whom preference was to be given, was "one who had lodged strangers;"[3] and the habit of doing so is further encouraged by the suggestion, that in exercising it some have found that they have entertained angels unawares.[4] Clemens Romanus actually speaks of hospitality as an ingredient in the character of several persons mentioned in the Old Testament which recommended them especially to God, when Scripture itself does not so express itself with respect to them, or at least does so by implication only, if at all. Thus a son is said to have been given to Abraham on account of his faith and hospitality,[5] and Rahab to have been saved on account of her faith and hospitality,[6] and there appear to have been very early Treatises upon this duty put forth by Churchmen. How

[1] 1 Tim. v. 3.
[2] Ibid. iii. 2; Titus i. 8.
[3] 1 Tim. v. 10.
[4] Heb. xiii. 2.
[5] Clemens, § 10.
[6] Ibid. § 12.

pressing, indeed, in the first instance, were the necessities of the Church, and what great exertions were to be made in order to furnish supplies equal to the occasion, is manifest from the very large proportion of their private property which the early Christians dedicated to the wants of the society; not that the Christians had at any time all things in common in such a sense as to retain nothing of their own, the latter supposition being inconsistent with the frequent exhortations of the Apostles in the Epistles to alms-deeds and to the right use of riches, exhortations repeated with no less emphasis from time to time by their successors.

The exact amount of the stipend paid out of this exchequer to the clergy is a matter too much of detail to find a place in Scripture, though from the term "double" being employed in the Apostle's assignment of the pay to the meritorious elder, it may be suspected that even then it was a fixed sum, or at least a fixed proportion of the sum total with which the elders had to deal. Apollonius, who flourished about the end of the second century or beginning of the third, and wrote against Montanus, speaks of that heretic paying "salaries" (σαλάρια) to those who were the preachers of his doctrine;[1] a term which would dispose us to the conclusion that in the Church there were stated stipends paid to ministers, from which this application of the word to the dissenters of that time took its form. Cyprian speaks of the payment made to the clergy in his day as a monthly dividend,[2] and of his own share, as "the portion which belonged to him."[3] The earliest approach to definite information on this point is furnished by Eusebius, who tells us incidentally that certain heretics at Rome, in the

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 18.

[2] Cyprian, Ep. 28, divisio menstrua.

[3] Ep. 36, sua propria quantitas.

reign of Severus, about the end of the second century or the beginning of the third, persuaded one Natalius to be their Bishop, with a salary of a hundred and fifty denarii a month, or about sixty pounds a year;[1] but as the Heretics were then probably a very small and inconsiderable body—Justin Martyr calls them on one occasion "certain persons" (τινὲς), as contradistinguished from orthodox believers at large, who were "very many" (πλεῖστοι)[2]—it may be well supposed that the sum they could afford their leader would not be a correct gauge of that which was the usual stipend of the corresponding functionary of the Church. But besides the drains upon the exchequer of the Church already enumerated, there was a further demand on it, expressed in general terms in the Acts by the phrase, "they parted it to all men as every man had need,"[3]—a phrase interpreted more specifically by Justin Martyr, of orphans, widows, sick destitute persons, prisoners, and strangers.[4]

I am endeavouring, it will be remembered, to develope and pursue even to its ramifications, a system of teaching and polity laid down by the Apostles which gave stability to the early Church, and in which it did in fact continue stedfast; not conducting my inquiry arbitrarily and as fancy leads the way, but on the principle that the phraseology of the Canonical Scriptures on these points, being often very brief and succinct, does at the same time unequivocally indicate the primary lines of a system which receives its interpretation from the aspect the Church presents in its structure immediately afterwards, and of which we are in possession; the more complete portraiture concurring, be it observed, in every particular, with the less formal one, so far as the features of the latter can be produced.

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 6. 28.
[2] Dialog. § 48.
[3] Acts ii. 45.
[4] 1 Apol. § 67.

But the verse in the Acts which we are evolving proceeds to say, that the first converts continued stedfast "in the fellowship (*κοινωνία*) and the breaking of the Bread, and the Prayers." It is possible that whilst enlarging on the frequent meaning of the word "teaching," I may have already anticipated something which would have fallen better under the head "fellowship;" that this would have been the occasion for pointing out those ecclesiastical rules and regulations which I have supposed the Apostles themselves to have dispersed, and even under higher authority than their own, and that the term "fellowship" applies principally to these; I shall take the term, however, in the sense in which Bishop Pearson understands it in this place, and consider the "fellowship" or "communion" and "the breaking of the Bread" to stand in close combination, and to indicate that another bond by which these first Christians were joined to the Apostles, to one another, and to a unity in Christ, was a collective participation in the Lord's Supper; the same combination occurring in the Epistle to the Corinthians,—"the Bread which we *break*, is it not the *Communion* of the Body of Christ?"—and I shall further consider "the Prayers," to mean especially, though it may not be exclusively, the primitive Liturgy according to which that Sacrament was administered. As, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we saw, was one of the farewell injunctions of our Lord, and was instantly adopted by the disciples and early Christians, when He was gone; so, "This is my Body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me," was the other farewell injunction, which was held no less sacred; and accordingly the great feature of public worship in the primitive Church, the pivot of its services, at once became the partaking of the Holy Communion. A

single expression suffices to prove this; "when the disciples were met together to *break Bread*," being at once seen to be equivalent to assembling for devotion in the Church. The earliest account we have, after the Apostles' times, of the Sunday Services of the Christians, supports this assertion. The Mass, which continued to be the paramount service of the mediæval Church, clenches the evidence. This participation in the Lord's Supper appears to have been a formal act, according to the very earliest notices we have of it, both canonical and patristical, an act accompanied by a solemn ceremonial. On one occasion, St. Paul, when speaking of the administration of this Sacrament, uses the phrase, "The cup of blessing, *which we bless*,"[1] implying a prayer of consecration; and the same inference may be drawn yet more certainly from another passage in the same Epistle, the irreverence of the Corinthians leading the Apostle to touch on the subject repeatedly, and thus to afford us information on it, which but for that might have been lost—"Else, when thou shalt *bless* with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned (τοῦ ἰδιώτου) say Amen at thy *giving of thanks* (or at thy Eucharist, ἐπὶ τῇ σῇ εὐχαριστίᾳ), seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?"[2]—where the Apostle contemplates the celebration of the Eucharist in a language unknown to the congregation; in which case, says he, how is the blessing pronounced by the minister over the Bread and the Wine to be understood by the people, and the several parts of the Liturgy to be properly recognised, so that they may themselves take their share in it?—For in the terms, "when thou shalt bless," and, "at thy giving of thanks," there is comprised, almost beyond a doubt, a service of considerable detail. Justin Martyr, who lived so very soon after the Apostles, actually affirms as much;

[1] 1 Cor. x. 16. | [2] Ibid. xiv. 16.

the officiating minister, according to him, offering up prayers and thanksgivings at much length.[1] And St. Chrysostom evidently supposes this passage of the Apostle to have a reference to such a formulary then in use; "for," says he, in commenting on the text of the Epistle to the Corinthians, "what the Apostle means is this: if you bless in a strange language, the layman, not knowing what you are uttering, and not able to interpret it, cannot add the Amen; for, not hearing the 'world without end,' which is the conclusion (of the prayers), he does not repeat the Amen."[2] And Irenæus incidentally mentions this very same phrase as one which was used by the Church at the Eucharist, and describes the Heretics as founding an argument on it in favour of their Œons, the εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, construed by them to suit their own purposes.[3] Moreover, the very casual manner in which the allusion to the office for the Eucharist is introduced by him, proves beyond dispute that it was one perfectly familiar to those for whom he was writing; an established formulary of the Church, in fact, at that time, and this was the second century; nay, more, I am of opinion, though I have never seen the remark made, that the "Ter Sanctus" is glanced at as an ingredient in the Communion Service, even by Clemens Romanus, actually the contemporary of the Apostles. That Tertullian has a notice of it has been ever acknowledged,[4] and that has been regarded as the first; but I suspect we have here an indication of it even prior to him—"Let us observe," writes Clemens, "the whole multitude of his Angels, how they stand by, and minister (λειτουργοῦσιν) unto Him—for the Scripture saith, Ten thousand times ten thousand stood beside Him, and thousand thousands mi-

[1] Apol. § 87.

[2] Quoted by Mr. Palmer, Orig. Liturg. ii. p. 115.

[3] Iren. i. c. 3, § 1.

[4] De Orat. § 3.

nistered (ἐλειτούργουν) unto Him, and cried 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts, all creation is full of his glory.' And accordingly let us, when assembled together with one mind in the same place (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ), conscientiously cry aloud to Him lustily as with one mouth, in order that we may be made partakers of his great and glorious promises."[1] Independently even of the general impression which this passage is calculated to produce, there is in it an adoption of several of the peculiar terms of the nomenclature of the Church, which is significant—attention drawn to the ministration of the Angels (λειτουργοῦσιν ἐλειτούργουν); and to the assembly "*in one and the same place*," a phrase certainly indicating the room in which the congregation met together on Sunday, in the language of Justin Martyr.[2] Those who have not been in the habit of investigating early ecclesiastical antiquity, must ever bear in mind that incidents of the kind here gathered up are not elements on which a lively imagination erects an ideal superstructure, but are simply the primary evidence of an organization, an indisputable organization, which comes out more and more distinctly in the documents of each successive generation; and the foundations of which were, as I have said, laid in the very depths of the Christian æra. They must learn that nothing is more correct than Bishop Pearson's notice, that "the greatest use of ecclesiastical history is this: to mark the true origin of every opinion, and observe the rise, not merely of heresies and schisms, *but of the dogmas and rites of the Church itself*."[3] They must carry along with them, that the hints which I have been developing from the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, or the Christian writings next in date to those, actually

[1] Clemens, § 34.

[2] Jus. Mart. 1 Apol. § 67, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται.

[3] Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 339.

grow into positive certainty a generation or two later, when the means of research are multiplied; insomuch, that we can pick many fragments of the Primitive Liturgy out of Justin;[1] out of Irenæus;[2] out of Tertullian;[3] and especially out of Cyprian, who, besides leaving on record detached passages of it,[4] in one place expressly mentions "the *usual Prayer*" in the Eucharist,[5] whilst describing the case of a female fanatic who affected to consecrate the elements by a ritual of her own—and if it be contended that by the "usual Prayer" is here meant the "Lord's Prayer," which St. Jerome does not scruple to affirm was used daily at the Eucharist by the Apostles, according to their Lord's command,[6] still this would prove that a service there was of greater length than the injunction of our Lord with respect to the Eucharist literally construed would seem to imply, and that of such service the Lord's Prayer was an invariable part.

But "the Prayers" to which reference is made in the Acts as a bond of union amongst the members of the early Church, may have a wider meaning than those of the Communion Office or Liturgy properly so called. It is equally certain that there was a public form of Baptism of the most primitive, even of an apostolical, date; which was a centre of union of the utmost efficacy. And here, as before, the traces of the form are discoverable even in Scripture itself. Thus, when in the First Epistle of St. Peter it is said, "The like figure whereunto even *Baptism* doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the *answer* of a good conscience

[1] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 13; Dialogue, § 35. 133.

[2] Irenæus, i. c. 21, § 3.

[3] Tertullian, Apol. § 39; De Orat. § 29.

[4] Cyprian, Ep. 31; Ad Demetriaram, 223.

[5] Ep. 75.

[6] Adv. Pelag. iii. c. 15.

toward God,"[1] the stipulation or promise made at that Sacrament is clearly alluded to in the term "answer," which conveys the idea, as Hooker himself holds,[2] of the interrogatories put at Baptism even then, from the very first; and a corresponding hint is dropped in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where mention is made in continual sequence, of the foundation of *Repentance* from dead works, and of *Faith* towards God, and of the doctrine of *Baptism;*[3] and the ground is still further narrowed, the very subject of that "answer" or stipulation before referred to transpiring, namely, an assurance given by the party before the administration of the rite, of his *Repentance,* and of his *Faith;* the whole a provision very brief, as set down in these few words of Scripture, but, if we have put a right interpretation on them, pregnant with much detail; for the "Repentance" implies a renunciation of sin, and probably a form of renunciation; and "the Faith" implies no less a confession of certain fundamental articles of Faith, and probably a rule of Faith embodying them in a summary, or in other words a Creed—both which formularies we can *prove* to have existed in an age very close to the apostolical; and therefore we may *conjecture* with great probability, under the guidance of these hints in Scripture, that both of them existed in the apostolical age itself. For here again, as before, we cannot be charged with rearing a theory without a base; the superstructure positively exists, and rises upon the very lines thus traced out in Scripture, leading us to the inevitable conclusion, that more is meant in the unevolved terms of Scripture than a superficial reader of them would imagine. For what wonder that these great elements of the Church and her services should have to be carefully and patiently investigated before they can be

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 21.
[2] Eccl. Pol. v. c. 63; vol. ii. p. 392, Keble's Ed
[3] Heb. vi. 1, 2.

fully perceived and acknowledged? How constant an element in the devotions of the early Christians must have been the "Lord's Prayer!" So comprehensive a prayer as it was ever reputed to be—commended to the Church, as it was, by injunctions so authoritative and so touching—doubtless the worship of the most primitive age, whether in private or public, was never completed without it; yet the evidence for the use of it in the Canonical Scriptures is most indirect and evasive; as much so as that for the use of a Creed or for interrogatories at Baptism; or of a thanksgiving and ceremonial benediction over the Eucharist. We find, perhaps, an allusion to it in the form which an exclamation takes as recorded in the twenty-first chapter of the Acts.[1] When the brethren of Cæsarea besought Paul not to go up to Jerusalem, "and when he would not be persuaded," the narrative continues, "we ceased, saying, *The will of the Lord be done*," a familiar quotation of the corresponding clause in the prayer. And in the Second Epistle to Timothy[2] we have a clearer case, inasmuch as the coincidences between the passage and the prayer in this instance are several in number: "And the Lord shall *deliver* me from every *evil* work, and will preserve me unto *his heavenly kingdom:* to whom be *glory for ever and ever, Amen!*"—the resemblance, however, very much closer in the Greek than in the English. I do not think another place in the New Testament could be pointed out which would argue an acquaintance of the primitive Christians with the Lord's Prayer, or their habitual in-

[1] Acts xxi. 14.

[2] 2 Tim. iv. 18. Καὶ ῥύσεταί με ὁ Κύριος ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔργου πονηροῦ, καὶ σώσει εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπουράνιον· ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

Comp. Matt. vi. 13. Ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ· ὅτι σοῦ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία, καὶ ἡ δύναμις, καὶ ἡ δόξα, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Ἀμήν. A strong argument, by the by, may be drawn from hence for the genuineness of the Doxology in the Lord's Prayer,

troduction of it into their ritual. But it is certain, that the brief expressions in the Canonical Scriptures which I have quoted, significant, as I have contended, of promises and vows, renunciations of sin and confessions of Faith, even then made at baptism, are in full accordance as in the former case of the office of the Eucharist, with the practice of the age immediately succeeding, when the evidence becomes clear and not to be mistaken or misrepresented: Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus, Cyprian, all referring repeatedly to these *renunciations*, the very word still retaining its place in our Catechism;[1] the same or other testimony of even earlier date still equally referring to these *confessions of Faith;*[2] Cyprian, indeed, who on all these subjects is invaluable, from the greater precision with which he is apt to speak on them, marks the orderly nature of the service according to which baptism was administered, whilst denouncing the practice of an heretical female (not the same as before mentioned) who took upon herself to baptize, "making use," says Cyprian, "of the ordinary and legitimate words of the interrogatories, for the purpose of seeming to differ in nothing from *ecclesiastical rule.*"[3]

The argument for the like early use of other offices in the Church may be less cogent; the traces of them less distinctly apparent in the Scriptures of the New Testament—perhaps, in some cases, not discoverable there at all; nevertheless, existing in all probability in the times of the Apostles, and in several instances their existence,

[1] Tertullian, Ad Martyr. § 3; De Baptismo, § 18; Origen, Exhortatio ad Martyr. § 12; Hippolytus, Theophan. § 10; Cyprian, Ep. 6.; De Bono Patientiæ, p. 251.

[2] Irenæus, i. c. ix. § 4; Tertullian, De Spectac. § 4; De Virgin. Veland. § 1; De Prescript. Hæret. § 21; Clemens Alex. Stromat. vii. § 15, p. 887.

[3] Cyprian, Ep. 85.

at a period soon after at least, matter of certainty and admitting of demonstration.

Thus that there was a form for Confirmation in the very beginning of the Church is more than credible. The imposition of hands, and prayer for the Holy Ghost, which constitute the features of this ordinance as administered by the Apostles Peter and John to the parties whom Philip the Deacon had baptized, are preserved and assume the aspect of a fixed rite in Cyprian, who grounds the practice of the Church in his own day on this apostolical precedent, and speaks of those "who had been baptized being presented to the prelates, that by their *prayer* and imposition of hands they might receive the Holy Ghost;"[1] a mode of expression very consistent with an usage even then old and established. The same may be said of a service for marriage: this, too, was very probably a set form even in the most primitive times—certainly in Tertullian's age it was so; and the terms in which he mentions it indicate that it had long been so. "Who can tell," says he, "the happiness of a marriage which the Church cements and the Eucharist confirms?"[2] —then, as subsequently in the mediæval Church, the Sacrament of the Holy Communion accompanying it, the trace of which even yet remains in the rubric of our own Prayer Book, which affirms it to be convenient that the new-married persons should receive the Holy Communion at the time of the marriage, or at the first opportunity after their marriage. And when one sees in the early Liturgies, as one does ever afterwards in the mediæval, the witnesses of the marriage represented as God, the congregation assembled, and the *angels*, one may suspect that this last was certainly a clause in the original and primary office, so consistent as it is, both in letter and

[1] Cyprian, Ep. 73. | [2] Ad Uxor. ii. c. 28.

spirit, with that passage in the Epistle to the Corinthians, which enjoins the women to wear a veil on their heads when in Church, because of the angels; an injunction which might seem to have an especial propriety on such an occasion as at their nuptials; and that in expunging this paragraph of the service at the Reformation, as we did, we suppressed a feature of the most extreme and reverend antiquity.

I will add, that a passage in Eusebius tends very much to confirm the evidence I have already given of the existence of a most primitive Ritual in the Church, which descended from generation to generation; for, having occasion to mention Philo and a book of his, in which he describes the habits of the Therapeutæ—a sect in Egypt, which Eusebius seems disposed to think were, in fact, the first Christians, the name of Christian not having then reached that country—he proceeds: "This same Philo is reported to have had communication with Peter at Rome, who was preaching the Gospel to the inhabitants of that city; and this is not improbable, for the work of his of which I am speaking, and which he composed at a later period, clearly comprises the *canons of the Church observed by us even to the present time.*"[1] Now, as this supposed intercourse of Philo with St. Peter is represented as occurring under Claudius, whose reign ended in A.D. 54, it may be presumed that Eusebius considered the ecclesiastical regulations of his own day to have been in existence even so early as that date, and to have been imparted to Philo by St. Peter, or, in other words, that Eusebius regarded the ordinances of the Church of his time to be apostolical.

[1] Eccl. Hist. ii. c. 17. Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὃ φάμεν σύγγραμμα εἰς ὕστερον καὶ μετὰ χρόνους αὐτῷ πεπονημένον, σαφῶς τοὺς εἰς ἔτι νῦν καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς πεφυλαγμένους τῆς ἐκκλησίας περιέχει κανόνας.

On the whole, then, I apprehend those persons to be mistaken who look upon the apostolical Church as a disjointed society, and, by a neglect to investigate the deeper and more hidden ligaments by which it was braced together, find for themselves, as they think, a sanction for all manner of latitudinarian licence in the exemplar of the Church of primitive times.

CHAPTER III.

The Apostles' Continuance at Jerusalem.—Their Proceedings.—St. Paul and St. Barnabas.—The Church at Antioch.—St. Paul's Travels.—His Imprisonment at Rome.—St. Mark.—St. John.—His Death at Ephesus.—St. James.

NEITHER is it a matter for wonder that the Church should be thus speedily organized. It must be ever recollected that the Apostles were not dispersed over the wide world immediately on the crucifixion of our Lord. It was not now as it was when Jesus sent forth his twelve Disciples in the first instance to break up the ground by a desultory mission, to initiate preliminary measures only, charged to proclaim the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, and empowered to work miracles that would astound and enforce attention at least to the tidings they were announcing, and the great events that were on the eve of their accomplishment. The Gospel had now to be fixed on broad and solid foundations; contrivance, and system, and combination were required for carrying on successfully a measure so vast, and meant to be so enduring; and, accordingly, we are told by Apollonius, an author of the second century to whom I have already had occasion to refer, that there was a tradition (and a tradition of such a date must be received with the utmost respect) that the Saviour gave commandment to the Apostles not to leave Jerusalem till after twelve years from his ascension;[1] and Eusebius goes so far as to say,

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 18.

that during the whole forty years which elapsed between the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, the greater part of the Disciples, together with James the Bishop, still continued there, God affording it this advantage in the hopes that it would even yet repent and be saved.[1] Moreover, the same tradition of Apollonius is recorded in the "Preaching of Peter," a document certainly in existence in the beginning of the second century, or about the year of our Lord 123;[2] the passage to this effect quoted also from it by Clemens Alexandrinus,[3] in the accuracy of the substance of it thus deriving a further sanction from him. Where we may remark, by the way, that we have here another testimony, in addition to such as I have already adduced, that our blessed Lord held communication with his Disciples on the subject of the ecclesiastical structure, as well as the doctrinal teaching, of the Church, during that mysterious forty days which preceded his final departure from among them; and it may be further noted, that the supposition of the Disciples still remaining at Jerusalem under such an injunction is very consistent with an incident recorded of them in the Acts, that when the great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem broke out on the death of Stephen, "all were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, *except the Apostles;*"[4] a sacred command, it may be thus imagined, operating upon them, which caused them to maintain their post, whatever might be their wish.[5] I say, then, that the whole body of the Apostles making Jerusalem their headquarters for so many years, years occupied entirely in founding and establishing the Church in the region imme-

[1] Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 7.
[2] Grabe, Spiceleg. i. p. 62.
[3] Stromat. vi. c. 5, § 43.
[4] Acts viii. 1.
[5] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 354.

diately round about that centre,[1] must necessarily have been called upon to decide all the great questions of ecclesiastical polity. So long a period of time, and so active and eventful an one, could not have passed without circumstances arising which would compel them to lay all the principal planks, as it were, of the spiritual ark which had to float henceforward on the waters for ever. It might seem that it was for this very purpose they were directed to remain so long a time stationary and united, that it was a part of the Divine economy, and one which may supply a hint to ourselves as to the most successful method of dispersing the Gospel, to establish a basis for further operations before any commencement of the work was attempted; to concentrate a force which by degrees might make itself felt to remote extremities; to kindle at the focus of religious affairs a fire of such intensity and strength as would radiate readily to a distance. "Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the name of Jesus among all nations, but it was to *begin at Jerusalem*."[2] Jerusalem was to be the primary spring of the movement, and care was to be taken, before its action was taxed, that the power should be equal to the enterprise. "Out of Sion was to go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."[3] It was not merely to rest there, as Jerome observes upon this text, "but to go forth from thence."[4] Whatever might be the distinction of future Churches—whichever amongst them might eventually secure for itself the precedence and primacy—it was with the Church of Jerusalem, it was "with us," to use the language of Cyril, Bishop of that city, "that all prerogative originated."[5] It was "Jeru-

[1] Justin Mart.
[2] Luke xxiv. 49.
[3] Isaiah ii. 3.
[4] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 327.
[5] Catech. Lec. iii. 7.

salem," according to the Council of Constantinople, when speaking to the Bishops assembled at Rome, "that was the mother of all the Churches;" and whether the Church of Rome was founded by St. Peter or not, and whether the Church of Antioch was founded by him or not, the Church of Jerusalem was founded by him, as well as by all the Apostles, beyond a doubt, and before any other whatever. The ground, therefore, was to be made good on this favoured spot before further advances were attempted on the unbelieving world. The Church of Jerusalem was to be the stronghold, the occupation of which was to give vigour, support, and stability to the campaign of the Cross. The model system, which all the Apostles had concurred in establishing within these precincts, was to be carried away with him by each of them to the region of the world where he found the eventual field for his labours; and thus all the Churches would be constructed in their cardinal features one and the same.

The history of the Acts would embrace a period far longer than the twelve years during which it was prescribed, as it should seem, that the Apostles should remain at Jerusalem—probably upwards of thirty; long before the expiration of which some of them at least must have been scattered far and wide. But many incidents transpire in that history, as well as in the Epistles, calculated to confirm the views I have been setting forth, and to show that a lodgment was effected for the Gospel in Judæa and the countries contiguous before any serious inroads were projected on regions more remote. Thus it was at Jerusalem, and immediately after the ascension, that provision was made to supply the defection of Judas, and the College of the Apostles restored to its integrity. Here they had a daily ministration or distri-

bution, probably in connection with the Eucharist, for the poor.[1] Here they formally ordained parties to relieve them in this office, which in itself points to its being more than a social or economical function. Here they convoked the Church whenever there was a cause for it; and on the first occasion at least, when they did so, it was the act of all the Twelve.[2] Here the Apostles had *attendants* to assist them in the lower and more mechanical parts of their duties; for such appear to have been the "young men"[3] who carried out the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira; probably answering to the "minister" who is described as waiting on Barnabas and Saul—"they had John to their minister."[4] From hence they despatched members of their body on missions to plant, regulate, or visit Churches within the range of Jerusalem. When they heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, through Philip, they sent down Peter and John to confirm the parties he had baptized; and when tidings of numerous conversions at Antioch reached them, they forwarded Barnabas thither, to deal with the case as it might be best, on the spot.[5] We read of St. Peter leaving Jerusalem, passing through all quarters, and so returning there to make a report of his proceedings to the other Apostles;[6] the Churches visited on these circuits appearing to have taken an organized form almost immediately. Thus there was a company of "widows," of whom Dorcas was one, found by St. Peter at Joppa, and a stock of clothes, it may be presumed, prepared by them for the destitute among the Christian body.[7] More-

[1] Acts iv. 35, vi. 1; see Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 346.

[2] Acts vi. 2.

[3] Οἱ νεώτεροι, v. 6; οἱ νεανίσκοι, v. 10.

[4] Acts xiii. 5.

[5] Ibid. xi. 22.

[6] Ibid. xi. 1, 2, 3.

[7] Ibid. ix. 36. 39.

over the language we meet with is, that "the Churches had rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied,"[1] as though they were numerous and orderly; each of them, no doubt, conforming itself to the prototype at Jerusalem, that is, continuing stedfast in the Apostles' doctrine, and the fellowship, and the breaking of the bread, and the prayers; for the same "customs" almost immediately prevailed in all "the Churches," the "same things were taught everywhere, in every Church."[2]

By-and-by we perceive Antioch, in its turn, becoming a second basis, more particularly in reference to the extension of the Church amongst the *Gentiles;* not, however, without *Jerusalem* maintaining its primary and dominant position; the proceedings of the Church of Antioch conducted in accordance with those at Jerusalem. When Paul and Barnabas, eventually chiefs of the Church of Antioch, began their career together, Paul was taken by Barnabas, and introduced by him to the Apostles at Jerusalem.[3] When certain brethren disturbed the mind of the Church at Antioch on the subject of circumcision, it was determined that Paul and Barnabas should go to Jerusalem, and lay the case before the Apostles and Elders.[4] Still, when, after a while, these two Apostles were fairly established at Antioch, it was the Church of that place which, with due solemnities, sent them forth to erect other Churches, as the Church of Jerusalem had sent forth St. Peter and St. John, and others, on similar missions.[5] In this round they were on the whole, though not without serious conflicts, eminently successful, and

[1] Acts ix. 31.
[2] 1 Cor. iv. 17; Ibid. xi. 16.
[3] Acts ix. 27; Gal. ii. 9.
[4] Acts xv. 2.
[5] Ibid. xi. 22. 30; xii. 25; xiii. 2, 3. Λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν.

especially amongst the Gentiles, in favour of whom their commission ran;[1] and though St. Peter, as we have seen, had the honour of giving the Gentiles the first call, still it may be collected from his dissimulation at Antioch, now the stronghold of the Gentile Church, that his old prejudices had withheld him from extending his more zealous exertions beyond the pale of the Jews; insomuch that when certain persons came from James and the Jewish Church of Jerusalem to Antioch, where he then was, he shrank from eating any longer with the Gentile Christians of the latter place, as he had submitted to do till then, and exposed himself to the rebuke of St. Paul, who was now taking the lead in their service, and occupying Antioch, their citadel, as his own.

The proceedings of the Church of Antioch accordingly became a duplicate of those of Jerusalem, and shed a further light on the method of founding and rearing up the Churches at the beginning; the one case often affording supplemental information in the silence of the other; for there can be no doubt that the arrangements adopted by St. Paul and St. Barnabas, due allowance being made for difference of circumstances, would be on the whole the same as those of St. Peter and St. John, or of any other of the Apostles when employed in the like work. Thus we find them ordaining Elders in every Church, and, that object achieved, returning to *Antioch*, from whence they set out,[2] to lay before the Church of that place an account of their doings; as St. Peter, who proceeded on a similar visitation from *Jerusalem*, returned, we saw, to Jerusalem, to make his report there; and at Antioch they remained till they were again put in motion on an errand of the same kind;[3] this time, however, carrying with them certain decrees or canons of the

[1] Gal. ii. 9; Acts xiii. 42. 46.
[2] Acts xiv. 26.
[3] Acts xv. 36.

Apostles, meant to keep the peace and establish uniformity of practice in all the congregations;[1] and this done, they again worked their way back (at least, we can trace this in St. Paul) to their original starting-point.[2] For though that Apostle excused himself to the Jews at Ephesus for not tarrying with them longer on account of his anxiety to keep the feast then at hand, at *Jerusalem*, a cause for his departure which they would at once admit to be imperative, yet he had no sooner saluted the Church at Jerusalem, than he repaired to his more natural home at *Antioch*, the centre from which he set out on his zealous travels,[3] and the pivot on which the Church of the Gentiles, without, more especially revolved. And this circumstance, it may be added by the by, might induce St. Paul, when talking with Jews at Ephesus, to prefer the mention of *Jerusalem* to that of *Antioch*, as the city for which he was bound (for he had in fact both of those places in contemplation), and might also account for St. Peter, with his strong exclusive feelings as a Jew still about him, in spite of the revelation at Joppa, consenting to hold social intercourse with the Gentiles at Antioch, where they constituted the bulk of the Christian body, till the arrival of his friends from Jerusalem revived in him ancient and deep-rooted associations, and made him afraid or ashamed of persevering in the right.

About half the time which this visitation occupied, St. Paul spent at *Corinth alone*,[4] continuing there "a year and six months," and assigning only the same period to Syria

[1] Acts xvi. 4.

[2] Ibid. xviii. 22.

[3] I understand that when it is said in that verse, "*he went up*, and saluted the Church," it was to *Jerusalem* that he went up, and the Church of *Jerusalem* that he saluted; which is agreeable both to the context and the Greek.

[4] Acts xviii. 1. 11. It was, according to Bishop Pearson, from A.D. 50 to the beginning of A.D 54. Annal. Paulin., Minor Theol. Works, i. pp. 380–384.

and Cilicia, Derbe and Lystra, Phrygia and Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Beræa, and Athens. Doubtless it will be said he was informed that God had much people in that city, but again it fell in with the general principle on which, as I have observed, the planting of the Gospel was conducted, namely, that of fixing it effectually in certain chosen spots, and then allowing it to make offshoots from thence; Corinth, which was the resort of strangers from all quarters, supplying an admirable position for ulterior advances, and opening a door towards Italy, from whence indeed Aquila and Priscilla had just arrived, and generally to the world.

At Antioch, St. Paul again continued to reside for some time, as before,[1] till once more he set out to visit the Churches, taking them in order, through Galatia and Phrygia; when now he made Ephesus his resting-place as he before did Corinth, selecting this as another basis, which, lying at some distance from Jerusalem, Antioch, and Corinth, and furnishing a good key both to Asia and the eastern parts of Greece, would provide another field for enterprise, and stand a Mother-Church in that quarter, as the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Corinth, respectively did in their own districts. Accordingly, at Ephesus he set up his staff for three years, making his presence there felt almost throughout all Asia Minor;[2] the fruits of which sojourn are apparent, when, on his return from Macedonia (for to Macedonia he had proceeded from Ephesus), he sent for the Elders of the Church of Ephesus, or its Bishops, or rather both, to attend him at Miletus.[3] For there, there appears to have been a gathering of clergy from all sides, such as indicated great progress to have been made in the establishment of the Church throughout those parts; an im-

[1] Acts xviii. 23.
[2] Ibid. xx. 31.
[3] Acts xx. 17. Compare ver. 28.

pression conveyed indeed by the very brief narrative of this event given in the Acts of the Apostles, but more than confirmed by the history of the same transaction as recorded by Irenæus, who, belonging to that neighbourhood himself, personally acquainted with Polycarp, and living so soon after the event, may be considered to speak from local as well as scriptural information; and who says, that on that occasion the Bishops and Presbyters were called together, not only those of Ephesus, but those of all the surrounding towns:[1] the argument of Irenæus, which was to show that St. Paul used no reserve in the communication of his doctrine, as the heretics against whom he was writing pretended, deriving very much of its force from the comprehensive character of this assembly: and, indeed, the Apostle's parting charge to them, "Behold I know that *ye all*, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more; take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," is enough in itself to determine its large compass.

Eventually, St. Paul made his way back after this visitation, as after the former one, to *Jerusalem*, partly to be present at the Feast,[2] but yet more, perhaps, to renew the report of his mission and its results to St. James and all the Elders;[3] this he did on the second day after his arrival, probably intending, as before, to end his pilgrimage at Antioch, had not his purpose been frustrated by the tumultuous events which attended his presence at Jerusalem. These resulted in carrying him to Rome, where God in his providence had other and most important work for him to do; and where it was so ordered that he should again establish another basis, whether for himself or for others, the most effective perhaps of any,

[1] Irenæus, iii. c. 14, § 2.
[2] Acts xx. 16.
[3] Acts xxi. 18.

a foundation for proceedings in France, in Spain, and in Africa. At *Rome*, then, he abode two whole years, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence; all which had happened to him falling out to the furtherance of the Gospel; his bonds in Christ manifest in the Palace, and in all other places.[1] I will add, that if the feature I have been remarking in St. Paul's missionary travels had been properly considered, several palpable mistakes in the subscriptions of his Epistles would have been avoided. Whoever added those subscriptions did not bear in mind that, *à priori*, the Apostle might be supposed likely to write most letters from those towns where he made the longest stay. Had he recollected this, he would perhaps have abstained from affixing the date of "Philippi," to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which most assuredly was written from Ephesus:[2] he would have hesitated to refer the date of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, to Athens, which was certainly written from Corinth,[3] and to have repeated the blunder with respect to the Second Epistle.[4]

There is something very striking in the choice made by the first heralds of the Gospel, of these strong positions. Obscure as they were themselves, they were not content with taking up obscure ground: they did not secrete themselves in rural and sequestered neighbourhoods, and trust to emerge by degrees as their new principles should creep through the country without observation; they boldly fixed their head-quarters by preference in the most conspicuous and flourishing towns; Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, being all of them sites the most commanding;—cities—populous, busy, alive, intelligent,

[1] Philippians i. 12, 13.

[2] See 1 Cor. xvi. 8, and Origen, περὶ εὐχῆς, 31, p. 269.

[3] Compare 1 Thessalonians iii. 6, and Acts xviii. 5.

[4] 2 Thess. ii. 2.

pre-eminently set on a hill; serving, in addition to their general aptitude for the purposes contemplated by the Apostles, to convince mankind that humble teachers of the Gospel, who planted their standards so bravely, must be confident in their cause, must feel their strength, were ready to challenge inquiry, and were convinced that their efforts would make an impression on the world.

We have now, perhaps, attended on the Apostle up to the year 63. There remains, however, a good deal of St. Paul's life and occupations to be accounted for still; the Acts of the Apostles only embracing so much of his history as ends with his first imprisonment at Rome, whereas five years probably elapsed after his liberation before he was put to death.[1] It is not to be believed that he was taking his ease during such an interval. The energy of his character, the sense of his responsibility, and the spiritual wants of the world, alike forbade it. He had, some time ago, intimated an intention of visiting Spain; and from the terms of that intimation, which occurs in his Epistle to the Romans, written from Corinth,[2] it is evident that he contemplated making Rome a stage in his journey, and deriving advantages in the prosecution of it from the assistance he expected to meet with in that place. He is now actually in that city; though brought there under circumstances he could not have foreseen when he penned the words. He is at Rome, and at liberty; the world once more before him. What more probable than that he should profit by the occasion now afforded him, of completing his plan—his tendency still westward from the very beginning of his ministry, and go forwards to Spain? Clemens Romanus, his contemporary, and a writer who appears to have been in possession of knowledge of St. Paul, derived to him

[1] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, i. pp. 391. 396.

[2] Romans xv. 24.

from opportunities of his own, expressly affirms that his travels extended to the limits of the west,[1] a phrase by no means applicable to Rome, particularly when used by one who was dwelling at Rome at the moment, but quite applicable to Spain, the like being expressly found in several authors in direct relation to that country,[2] and both Chrysostom and Theodoret asserting, without any hesitation, in so many words, that to Spain the Apostle went after his imprisonment at Rome.[3] Certain it is that Spain was amongst the nations which received the Gospel the earliest. It had its Churches, and what is more, it had long had its Churches, in the time of Irenæus, for he not only refers to them, but refers to them as channels of the primitive ecclesiastical tradition which proved the doctrine of the Church to be opposed to that which the heretics, against whom he was disputing, claimed for orthodox.[4] All this is very consistent with St. Paul's visit to that country. What became of the Apostle after this is still more matter of conjecture, the history of the Acts being entirely silent upon it, and the only data on which we have to go being hints, and those very ambiguous ones, which transpire in his Epistles. Thus it may be surmised, perhaps, that he bent his way back from Spain to Judæa; it had been his custom to terminate his journeys there; and there is a message in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, if we consider that Epistle to be St. Paul's, as there can be little doubt it is, and the Hebrews addressed to be those of Judæa more especially, apprizes them of his approach to that land.[5] It may be further conjectured that he dropped Titus at Crete on his way,[6] for it is difficult to find any moment in

[1] Clemens, Ep. § 5.
[2] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, ii. p. 361.
[3] Ibid. i. p. 392.
[4] Irenæus, i. c. 10, § 2.
[5] Hebrews xiii. 23. 34.
[6] Titus i. 5.

the previous biography of St. Paul open to this incident; and it is evident that the Gospel had been firmly established in that island before St. Paul touched there with Titus, who was commissioned to set in order the things *that were wanting*, and ordain elders in every city; a state of affairs which would better correspond with a late than an early period of St. Paul's ministry: that after a while he quitted Judæa again, and for the last time, to visit the Churches, taking Timothy along with him, who had accompanied him to Judæa,[1] and leaving him at Ephesus, as he had before left Titus at Crete, as bishop of that place, whilst he himself, as on former occasions, pushed on for Macedonia;[2] for, again, it would not be easy to find a niche in the narrative of St. Paul's life, as hitherto told, where this transaction would conveniently drop in. It could not have happened on his first going to that country, for Timothy then accompanied him;[3] it could not have happened on his second journey there, for he then sent Timothy on before him;[4] it would seem, therefore, that it was on some third journey from Judæa through Asia and Macedonia, such as we are supposing, that Timothy still attended him, and was then permanently fixed at Ephesus, as its bishop. It may be further surmised, that going on into Macedonia, St. Paul now halted at Philippi, tarrying there for a time, and so making good the expectations, to this effect, he had raised in the Philippians in his Epistle from Rome;[5] that he wintered at Nicopolis, in Epirus;[6] again visited Corinth, where he left Erastus;[7] Troas, where he left his books and his parchments;[8] and Miletum, whether the town of that name in Asia Minor or in Crete, where he left Trophimus sick;[9]

[1] Hebrews xiii. 23.
[2] 1 Timothy i. 3.
[3] Acts xvi. 1. 9; xvii. 14.
[4] Ibid. xix. 22.
[5] Philipp. i. 25, 26; ii. 24.
[6] Titus iii. 12.
[7] 2 Timothy iv. 20.
[8] Ibid. iv. 13.
[9] Ibid. iv. 20.

for all these latter incidents are mentioned as of recent occurrence in his Second Epistle to Timothy, an epistle bearing internal evidence of having been written very shortly before his death,[1] and are therefore such as must have befallen him during the obscure interval of his life which I am now endeavouring to explore. Here, however, all trace of him ceases. Certain it is that he is finally to be found once more at Rome; passages in the same epistle I have just referred to, the Second Epistle to Timothy, bear token of it; "at my first answer," he there says, "no man stood with me," that is, when he was making his defence at Cæsar's judgment seat. But we are entirely in the dark as to the circumstances under which he reached this capital the second time, whether under constraint as before, or of his own free will; at all events, it is evident that Rome had become a place of much greater danger for him, as well as for all Christians, than it was on the former occasion. This might, perhaps, in some degree be attributed to the increased ferocity of Nero, as he grew in years, and his taste for blood became keener; yet more, to the rapid augmentation of the numbers of the Christians during the interval, which began to excite alarm in the authorities of the State; and most of all to the fact, that the Christians were made the scapegoats for the great fire of Rome, which had occurred since the first and before the second visit of the Apostle.[2] At his first visit, St. Paul was met on his road openly at Appii Forum, and accompanied by the brethren to the capital, where he was allowed to dwell two whole years in his own hired house, to receive all that came to him, to preach and teach the doctrines he thought fit, with all confidence and without any hindrance; those doctrines apparently entertained even in the imperial

[1] 2 Timothy iv. 6.

[2] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, ii. p. 383.

palace, and an interest taken in the party who was promulgating them, even in those high quarters.[1] But at his second visit all was changed. He was now placed under close custody, insomuch that Onesiphorus had to search him out very diligently, in order to find him;[2] it was now dangerous to be his friend, all men forsook him; he now speaks of his "chain," of his "bonds," of the "mouth of the lion," of his being "ready to be offered;" not to say that a deep solemnity and earnestness breathe throughout his Second Epistle to Timothy, which furnishes these facts, strongly expressive in itself of the crisis in which the Apostle felt himself to be standing. Scripture is silent with respect to the manner of his execution; but Clemens tells us that he suffered martyrdom at the hands of those in power,[3] and Dionysius in the second century, and Tertullian in the third, narrow the scene and the season to Italy, and to Rome under Nero.[4] Such was the progress of St. Paul's teaching, his range gradually enlarging itself from the Holy Land, as he established a substantial footing elsewhere; as he stretched his chain of strong-holds to the westward, beginning from Jerusalem, the navel of Christendom—

> "Those holy fields
> Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet,
> Which fourteen hundred years ago, were nail'd
> For our advantage, on the bitter cross."[5]

Before dismissing the subject of St. Paul's travels, we may observe that the effect which the Apostle produced on the several Churches he founded or visited, must have been rendered still more intense by the presence of the companions and fellow-labourers who attended him;

[1] Philippians i. 13; iv. 22.
[2] 2 Timothy i. 17.
[3] Clemens, Ep. § 5.
[4] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. ii. c. 25; Tertullian, Scorp. § 15.
[5] Shakspeare, Henry IV., Part I. Act I. Scene 1.

Titus, sometimes, till he left him to preside over the Church of Crete;[1] Timothy, yet more constantly, till he disposed of him at Ephesus; Silas through, at least, one long and laborious journey; Mark frequently; Luke, after he once joined him at Troas, probably by his side without interruption to the last;[2] and many more, some of them, perhaps, of the number of the seventy whom Jesus sent forth originally, and several of them persons who, having received this apostolical training, eventually occupied posts of distinction in the rising Church.

My narration has already led me to touch on the incipient movements of St. Peter. Of his ulterior walk, after he felt himself at liberty to extend his efforts for the creation of Churches beyond the limits of Palestine, we are left almost without a witness; the very direction in which he travelled uncertain; our estimate of it almost entirely depending on the position we give to the Babylon of which he speaks in his First Epistle.[3] That it was not the Assyrian Babylon seems highly probable, both because that city had then sunk into a solitude, few or no Jews there, amongst whom the Apostle could find a proper field for his labours,[4] Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Persian towns, having superseded it; because it may be very well doubted whether St. Peter ever set foot beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire, enormous in extent, and studded with colonies of Jews, his appointed, though not exclusive, arena; and, because the phraseology of the Epistle itself seems to contemplate his own residence at the moment, as well as that of the parties he was addressing in it, to be within the territories of one and the same supreme authority, namely, that of the Emperor of Rome.[5] Certain it is, that Eusebius records the impres-

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 23.

[2] Acts xvi. 8. 10, 11; Irenæus, iii. c. 14.

[3] 1 Peter v. 13.

[4] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, ii. p. 347.

[5] 1 Peter ii. 13, 14. 17.

sion of his own time, or, perhaps, of the time of Clemens Alexandrinus and Papias, to whose writings he had been just referring, to be, that when St. Peter dated his Epistle from Babylon, Rome was meant in a figure.[1] What might be the stay which St. Peter made at Antioch, before he embarked on this long journey that led him to Babylon, and in the course of which, we shall see, he probably visited many Churches, we have no means of determining. It may be supposed, however, that he was employed during that period, whatever it was, in overlooking the Church of Antioch, now deprived of the presence of St. Paul, as well as of Barnabas; and we shall find that on some other occasions St. Peter visited the same Churches as St. Paul; and we may conjecture that possibly those Apostles regulated their respective movements in some sort with a view to supplying each other's place as circumstances dictated; more especially since the mixed population of the towns they visited, composed partly of Hebrews and partly of Greeks, would furnish ample scope for the functions of each in his turn. However, the absence of St. Paul from Antioch in this instance must have lasted more than three years, probably from A.D. 50 to A.D. 54, half of which time he passed at Corinth; and if St. Peter continued at Antioch during this period, or during a considerable part of it, it may very well account for his being reckoned, by early ecclesiastical writers, as the first Bishop of Antioch.[2] We may imagine, then, St. Peter to set out on his journey from Antioch about the year 54, and to make his way through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, to the strangers of which countries he subsequently addresses his First Epistle; and Origen's testimony, quoted by Euse-

[1] Τροπικώτερον, Eccl. Hist. ii. c. 15.

[2] Jerome, Comment. in Ep. ad Galat. c. ii. See Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, ii. p. 327.

bius, confirms the fact that in those quarters St. Peter preached before he arrived at the capital of Italy.[1] Still endeavouring to track the steps of this great Apostle yet further, we may speculate upon his passing over from Asia, as St. Paul had done, and reaching Corinth. That eventually he did arrive at that city, and even make a considerable sojourn there, is highly probable. There was much to recommend it to him. It was a key of Greece, and from its maritime position and commercial character, of neighbouring countries also. It was full of Jews; and, moreover, it had enjoyed the presence of St. Paul for a long season; so that St. Peter might in this instance do, as he had before done at Antioch, follow up the impression which the Apostle of the Gentiles had made, to strengthen the things that were lacking. Moreover, the terms in which Clemens Romanus expresses himself when writing to the Corinthians, and recommending to them the example of St. Peter, as well as of St. Paul, seem to indicate that he counted on the sympathy of that Church for this Apostle, such a sympathy as would spring out of a personal knowledge of him and his character.[2] Dionysius of Corinth expressly claims St. Peter as well as St. Paul for a founder of the Corinthian Church; a privilege, says he, which the Church of Corinth shared with that of Rome.[3] That St. Peter visited Corinth, then, is almost certain; but that he had established himself there so early as the date of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, written about the year 57, seems very questionable; nor is the evidence of the verse from that Epistle adduced to prove the fact, conclusive. St. Paul might certainly have rebuked the Corinthians for splitting their Church into factions, and severally crying, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I of

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 1; Origen, vol. ii. p. 24.

[2] Clemens, Ep. § 5.

[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. ii. c. 25.

Cephas, without implying that St. Peter had then been there. St. Peter might have had his partisans there, without having been actually on the spot himself; and nothing is more likely than that many foreign Jews were at Corinth who had seen and heard St. Peter in Judæa and elsewhere, not to say that an expression which St. Paul subsequently uses in the same Epistle, "I have planted, Apollos watered," would rather argue that St. Peter had not at that time been actually engaged in cherishing the Church of Corinth. I should be disposed, therefore, to think that St. Peter's progress through Asia had occupied him a long time, age having reduced his powers of locomotion:[1] that he did not reach Corinth till a later date than A.D. 57; that finding already in that city friends and followers, he sojourned there for a season; that he did not arrive at Rome before A.D. 63, when St. Paul had recovered his liberty and departed; and that thus he once more relieved that Apostle in the charge of a most important Church, and again divided with him, as he had done before at Antioch, the character of a founder. Such arrangement of the incidents of St. Peter's history seems least exposed to objection; for it is hard to believe that no mention would have been made of him in the last chapter of the Acts which presents St. Paul to us at Rome, or in the several Epistles which that Apostle wrote from Rome, had St. Peter been there at the time. Rather may it be thought, as I have argued, that St. Peter was then employed in Asia, approaching Rome by slow degrees from that direction; that once at Rome, he

[1] In the passage of Origen, already referred to (vol. ii. p. 24), there is an expression which might lead us to think that, according to Origen's own idea, the journey occupied St. Peter a considerable time. Πέτρος δὲ ἐν Πόντῳ καὶ Γαλατίᾳ, καὶ Βιθυνίᾳ Καππαδοκίᾳ τε καὶ Ἀσίᾳ κεκηρυχέναι τοῖς ἐκ διασπορᾶς Ἰουδαίοις ἔοικεν· ὃς καὶ ἐπὶ τέλει ἐν Ῥώμῃ γενόμενος, ἀνεσκολοπίσθη κατὰ κεφαλῆς.

passed there or thereabouts the few remaining years of his life, writing from thence his two Epistles, the latter of which bears internal evidence of a date when his days were fast drawing to a close;[1] earning by his teaching a name which has been associated with the Church of Rome ever since; according to the strongest testimony of antiquity, sealing that teaching with his blood in company with St. Paul, the latter, as a Roman citizen, consigned to honourable death by decapitation, the former, as one of the "despectissima pars servientium," given over to the ignominious execution of the cross; far otherwise estimated by himself, however, who regarded it in its ordinary form as even too glorious an end for him, consecrated as it had been by the sufferings of his Lord, and who, accordingly, begged to have the mode of it reversed, and to be allowed to die with his head downwards.[2] This memorable event probably occurred on February 22, A.D. 68.[3]

Before dismissing the subject of St. Peter's travels, it may be proper to notice the manner and degree in which those of St. Mark are involved in his; the authentic particulars of which, however, are so few as to leave us in perplexity at best; but the thread which is most calculated to conduct us through the labyrinth, is the consideration that he was in very frequent communication with both the Apostles Peter and Paul, and a medium through which they probably brought into combination many of their movements.

[1] 2 Peter i. 13, 14.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 1.

[3] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 396. I am pleased to find that, in its general feature, this scheme for St. Peter's travels accords with Lardner's, though it was made without any reference to that writer; indeed, I turned to him with some solicitude, having found my own speculations so greatly at variance with some others that had happened to meet my eye since I wrote them. See Lardner's Credibility, vi. p. 550, et seq.

After the departure of St. Mark from Antioch with Barnabas for Cyprus, we lose sight of him for some time. He might seem to have separated from his companion after a while, for certainly no further mention is made of them together; indeed Barnabas disappears from history altogether, and might have been supposed dead, more especially as the identification of him with Jupiter at a former period by the people of Lystra would indicate, perhaps, his aspect to have been venerable and his years not few. That he was alive, however, when St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians, which he did from Ephesus about A.D. 57, is certain,[1] though his proceedings are entirely unknown; but if our conjecture respecting his age is of any value, it would render it probable that he did not survive the fall of Jerusalem, and therefore that the Epistle ascribed to him is not genuine, which was undoubtedly written after that event, though very shortly after it.[2]

St. Mark, then, might have returned to Antioch, this short circuit with Barnabas ended, and, finding Peter still there, might have set out with him on his journey towards Rome, and visited with him the Asiatic Churches on his way. Certain it is, that when writing to those Churches afterwards, St. Peter sends to them St. Mark's salutation as though he was personally known to them,[3] and perhaps this is the most likely occasion on which the mutual acquaintance could have been made: and yet it is no less certain that he was with St. Paul at Rome during his first imprisonment, that is, during some part at least of this very journey of St. Peter, being named by St. Paul when writing from Rome to Philemon,[4] called by him his fellow-labourer, and named again by him when writing to

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 6; see Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 386.
[2] Barnabas v. 16.
[3] 1 Peter v. 13.
[4] Philemon 24.

the Colossians, in the latter instance with a notice that he was meditating a visit to Colosse.[1] We may suppose, therefore, that St. Peter sent him on before him; as St. Paul, we know, did by Timothy on a similar occasion; and that, arriving at Rome before St. Paul left, he remained there till St. Peter came, for there he certainly was, as we have seen, when St. Peter wrote his First Epistle.[2] Here he might have spent some time with St. Peter, again associating with him, sharing his labours, as antiquity represents him to have done, and thus qualifying himself for eventually putting on record in his Gospel the matter with which that Apostle supplied him.[3] How long this intercourse continued cannot be guessed, but I conceive it was after a while broken off by St. Mark fulfilling the intention we have found him already expressing, of again visiting Asia, or at least Colosse. For when St. Paul is brought to Rome the second time, and when, during the final imprisonment he there underwent, he writes to Timothy his Second Epistle, he requests him to come to him, and to bring Mark with him.[4] St. Mark, therefore, was at that period in Timothy's neighbourhood, or, in other words, in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, of which Timothy had been left the Bishop. I conclude, therefore, that in obedience to this summons of St. Paul, St. Mark returned to Rome, where he now found both St. Peter and St. Paul; remained there to see the end of these illustrious servants of Christ; and then put down in writing, for the benefit of the Church, the treasures of knowledge he had gathered under them, from St. Peter more especially, and published his Gospel.[5] There is a difficulty, however, even here; for whilst Eusebius informs us in one place, on the authority of Irenæus, that

[1] Coloss. iv. 10.
[2] 1 Peter v. 13.
[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. ii. c. 15.
[4] 2 Timothy iv. 11.
[5] Irenæus, iii. c. 1. 81.

the Gospel of St. Mark was written after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul,[1] he tells us in another that "Peter sanctioned the Gospel of Mark, and approved it in the Churches,"[2] a difficulty which has been met by the hypothesis that St. Mark composed his Gospel before St. Peter's death, and having received his commendation of it, published it afterwards. This Gospel, according to the same Eusebius,[3] and Jerome concurs with him, St. Mark took with him into Egypt, where he founded the Church of Alexandria, and thus extended a knowledge of the Saviour to that quarter of the world.[4]

Of the ministerial course of St. John, considering how eminent an Apostle he was, we have little information; that little, however, confirms the remark I made at the beginning of this chapter, that the Apostles were so long stationary in and about Jerusalem, or, when diverging from it for the purpose of dispensing the Gospel and planting Churches, did their work so leisurely and with so much economy, that all the leading questions of ecclesiastical polity must have come under their notice and been determined by them, or at least such principles laid down by them as would serve to guide and govern the Church of all ages. Thus we may conclude from the Acts of the Apostles, that St. John never quitted Palestine during the period to which that history extends. Whenever he is mentioned in the Acts, he is found to be moving within those limits. We know that he was at Jerusalem sixteen years after the Ascension, or A.D. 49: for St. Paul tells us he saw him there when he visited that city with Barnabas.[5] And though Asia Minor was his ultimate destination, there is no evidence of his having been there during the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul. Both these Apostles address

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 8.
[2] Ibid. ii. c. 15.
[3] Ibid. ii. c. 16.
[4] In his article of St. Mark, De Viris Illustr. c. 8.
[5] Gal. ii. 9.

Epistles to the Christians of Asia Minor more than once, and to various Churches or individuals of that district; but no allusion is made in any of them to St. John. It is possible that the fulfilment of his Lord's dying charge, the care of his mother, might, amongst other things, detain him at Jerusalem, at all events for the remainder of her life; but however that might be, his constant residence there for so many years could not fail to give a lustre to that Church, and qualify it more and more for making its influence felt, as it did, on other Christian settlements. The tumult and disorder which prevailed in Judæa for several years previous to the fall of the capital, might be the immediate cause of St. John's migration to Asia; and with the exception of the time he passed in exile at Patmos, he appears to have dwelt chiefly at Ephesus, the most distinguished of the Asiatic cities, and one of the most solid pillars of the Christian temple; thus giving strength and character to that Church which commanded in Asia, as St. Paul had done by his residence there before him, and as he had himself done already by the Church of Jerusalem, which was equally conspicuous in Palestine. For whatever historical glimpses of the Apostle now present themselves, are all, more or less, connected with Asia, and nearly all with Ephesus. Irenæus speaks of traditions which had descended to him through the "Elders" or "Seniores," who had consorted with St. John in Asia.[1] Eusebius, who derives his facts from early authorities, assigns Asia to St. John as the region allotted to him for his ministry.[2] In the dispute respecting the season for observing Easter-day, Polycrates, an Asiatic bishop of the second century, founds his own practice, and that of the Asiatic Churches, of keeping the fourteenth day, mainly on the practice of St. John, as

[1] Irenæus, ii. b. 22. § 5. | [2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 1.

Polycarp had done before him;[1] and in the Revelation, where St. John is made the medium of God's message to the Churches, they are all Churches of Asia, and no other. To narrow the ground yet more, Ephesus is assigned by Irenæus as the scene of the Apostle's adventure, when going into a bath and finding Cerinthus in it already, he rushed out, exclaiming, "lest the roof fall on me."[2] Ephesus is the centre from which Clemens Alexandrinus represents him as repairing to the neighbouring cities, to plant Churches or confirm them, and set them in order; on one of which occasions it was that he commended to the bishop of the place he was visiting (so Clemens relates) a youth of engaging appearance, to be instructed, baptized, and trained to godliness; but that on returning after a while, and finding his charge neglected, the young man having been suffered to escape and join himself to a gang of mountain robbers, he rebuked the bishop, rescued the offender from his wicked companions and lawless life, and restored him with much passionate tenderness to the Church.[3] It was at Ephesus, according to Apollonius, that he raised a dead man to life;[4] and some of the same writers again describe Ephesus as the spot where he ended his days, and where his bones were laid in the reign of Trajan,[5] about a century after the birth of our Lord; his great length of years clearly intimated in the Saviour's prophetic words, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" As though the Providence which indeed regulates the fall of a sparrow, would shield his infant Church amidst all the dangers which were to befall it, nor suffer a man of it to be withdrawn before his time, and before the work God had for him to do was

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 24.
[2] Irenæus, iii. c. 3. § 4.
[3] Clemens Alexandrinus, Quis Dives salvetur, § 42.
[4] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 18.
[5] Ibid. v. c. 24; iii. c. 31. 39.

accomplished. That St. John had thus a charmed life would further appear from another incident (if confidence can be reposed in its reality), recorded by Tertullian, and repeated by subsequent writers, the only incident which happened to him out of Asia, his absence from Asia in this instance involuntary: "Happy Church!" exclaims Tertullian, of Rome, where the transaction in question is said by him to have occurred—"Happy Church! on which Apostles poured out all their doctrine with their blood: where Peter had a like passion with the Lord; where Paul is crowned with a death like that of John (the Baptist); where the Apostle John was plunged into boiling oil, and suffered nothing, and was afterwards banished to an island."[1] Such is the memorial of this fact left us by Tertullian, the manner of its introduction seeming to bespeak its general notoriety, as though it had only to be mentioned in order to be recognised. Certainly we know that Christians were dragged to Rome from the provinces for examination and punishment. This was especially the case where the parties were Roman citizens.[2] But it was also true of others. It was so with Ignatius. The thing, therefore, might very well happen to St. John in a persecution, and a persecution of the Christians there was at this time under Domitian. If the miracle occurred, it would account for the life of the Apostle being spared, and a remand to Patmos, from whence he was probably brought, being substituted for the death which had otherwise awaited him. Under the special exigences of those times, special protection was promised to those who believed. St. Paul, we are assured, took no harm from the viper evidently regarded by the natives of the place as a venomous reptile. Here was one case in which the promise certainly prevailed. Papias, who lived at the beginning of the second century,

[1] Tertullian, De Prescript. § 36. | [2] Pliny, Ep. x. 97.

relates, apparently on the authority of Philip the Apostle's daughters, who would be contemporary with the event, that Justus, called also Barsabas, in the Acts, drank a deadly poison, and, through the grace of the Lord, sustained no injury from it.[1] Here, I say, was another instance in which the promise, to all appearance, was accomplished. When the records which remain of the lives and proceedings of the Apostles are so scanty, whether canonical or patristical, it is not to be argued, from the omission of certain facts respecting them, that no such came to pass, especially where the antecedent probability of such facts occurring is established by the language of Scripture itself; for it is not likely that our Lord would have intimated his protection to be forthcoming, unless He had foreseen that there would certainly be a call for it. Of several of the Apostles we know absolutely nothing; yet it is not to be doubted they were executing their Lord's commission of teaching and baptizing the nations, and enjoying and exercising the supernatural powers the Lord imparted to them. Of some, of St. John amongst the number, we are partially informed; and it is not impossible or improbable that had we the minute details of his long and eventful life, we should find his escape from the boiling cauldron an incident of a piece with many others in relation to him; and as it is a mark of humility, so may it be of a mind open to truth, rather, perhaps, to acquiesce in the credibility of wonders like this reported of one who was certainly under the special keeping of God, than to have recourse to such expedients as Mosheim and Dr. Jortin suggest for reducing their magnitude and accommodating them to the taste of modern times.

St. James, another of the Apostles of the greatest distinction, was yet more circumscribed in the range of

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 39.

his personal services, Jerusalem itself being the compass within which they were confined. There were two of this name amongst the Apostles: the one, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, sufficiently distinguished from any other by his parentage and relationship, and soon ceasing to create any confusion in the annals of the Twelve by disappearing from the scene altogether, being killed by Herod with the sword;[1] the other, presented to us in the Sacred History under several designations, but still the identity of the individual under them all probably admitting of being proved. Among the women who stood watching the crucifixion were, according to St. Mark, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less;"[2] according to St. John, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Cleophas.[3] Therefore we conclude that Mary the mother of James the Less was the same as Mary the wife of Cleophas, or, in other words, that James the Less was the son of Cleophas. But James the Apostle, according to St. Matthew, was the son of Alpheus,[4] which is merely another pronunciation of the same Hebrew name;[5] so that James the Apostle and James the Less were one and the same person, the son of Mary the wife of Cleophas, who is further described in the passage of St. John, already referred to, as Jesus' mother's sister, and accordingly St. James is discovered to be the cousin of our Lord, or, as he is elsewhere called in the language of the Hebrews, "the Lord's brother;"[6] a circumstance which perhaps secured to him the primacy of the Church of Jerusalem, as episcopal chairs were afterwards assigned to the grandsons of St. Jude, related in the same degree to our Lord, for a

[1] Acts xii. 2.
[2] Mark xv. 40.
[3] John xix. 25.
[4] Matthew x. 3.
[5] חלפי. See Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 176, fol.
[6] Gal. i. 19.

similar reason.[1] In Jerusalem, then, he exercised his high functions, and from Jerusalem he wrote his Catholic Epistle, the internal evidence of which indicates a date later than the death of St. James, the brother of St. John, to whom some have ascribed it, an event which must have occurred as early as A.D. 43 or A.D. 44. For that Epistle deals with errors and defects in the Church as if they were already chronic, and, moreover, anticipates, from no great distance it may be thought, the calamity which was coming on the country in the approaching downfall of Jerusalem—"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow;" and again, yet more significantly, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Still, however far the decrees established at Jerusalem under James might reach, and whatever might be the circulation of his Epistle, in Jerusalem, as I have said, he constantly abode, and thus gave still more vital force to the action of that heart of Christendom, till death, in his case a violent one, overtook him. For the Jews, incensed at the progress of Christianity, and profiting by the anarchy of the moment, when, Festus dead, and his successor not yet appointed, they could do what seemed good in their own sight, urged St. James to address the people of Jerusalem at the passover, numbers being assembled, and a riot apprehended, and inform them rightly concerning Jesus, disabusing them of their confidence in Him, and allaying the feverish expectation of his advent. In order that he might be the better heard, they set him on a wing of the temple; but when the reply of James to their violent and importunate appeal proved to be, "Why question ye me concerning Jesus the Son of Man? He is now sitting in the heavens at the right hand of power, and is

[1] Hegesipp. apud Eus. iii. c. 20.

about to come in the clouds of heaven," they put him effectually to silence, by casting him down headlong, and afterwards dispatching him with a fuller's club.[1] Mosheim contends that St. James, St. Peter, and St. Paul are the only Apostles of whom it can be affirmed with certainty that they ended their lives as martyrs,[2] grounding his opinion chiefly on a passage in Tertullian. He may be right in his fact, except that both the Jameses must certainly be included. But the paragraph is not so decisive as he represents it. The heretics against whom Tertullian is contending disparaged martyrdom, disputed the texts usually advanced in commendation of it, described the apostolical writings as figurative and easily misunderstood on such a question. "But look to the case as recorded in the Acts," replies Tertullian, "at any rate you will there find Peter beaten, Stephen stoned, James slain, Paul torn in pieces;"[3] and if you would be content with other authority, as *e.g.* the lives of the Cæsars, where you read of the cruelties which Nero practised against the rising sect, you would learn that "Peter was girded by another" by being bound to the cross, and that "Paul received the freedom of the Roman commonwealth, by experiencing at Rome the glorious second birth of martyrdom!" It is not, therefore, Tertullian's intention to call in the help of history, except in these particular instances where it corroborates the testimony of Scripture itself; Scripture being the testimony he relied on, because Scripture was the testimony which, when clear, as Tertullian was endeavouring to render

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. ii. c. 23.

[2] De Rebus Christian. p. 82.

[3] Tertullian, Scorpiace, § 15. Quæ tamen passos Apostolos scimus; manifesta doctrina est; hanc intelligo solam, Acta decurrens nihil quæro: *i. e.* I am not making curious inquiries, content with the plain text of the Acts . . . Et si fidem commentarii voluerit hæreticus, instrumenta Imperii loquentur; ut lapides Hierusalem, (as the very stones cried out at Jerusalem,) Vitas Cæsarum legimus.

it by the accessory aid of secular documents, was accepted by the heretics. There might have been traditions respecting the painful and premature ends of other Apostles known to Tertullian, but his argument in this place did not admit of their production. Certainly in the Memoranda concerning the Twelve Apostles ascribed to Hippolytus,[1] violent deaths are assigned to several more of them. We there are told that St. Andrew, having preached among the Scythians and Thracians, was nailed to an olive tree, at Patræ, in Achaia, and so died; that St. Philip, having laboured in Phrygia, suffered crucifixion at Hierapolis, under Domitian; that St. Bartholomew took India for his field, a locality of much uncertainty in ancient geography, and was crucified at Albanus, a city of Armenia Major, a position which might limit its meaning in this instance: that St. Thomas, having taught in Parthia, Media, Persia, and elsewhere in those quarters, was pierced through the body in four places, by a lance of firwood, at Calamina, in India. The only persons among the Apostles who were exempt from these or similar sufferings being St. Matthew, who died a natural death at Hierea, a Parthian city; St. Jude, who ended his course in peace, after preaching to the people of Edessa and throughout Mesopotamia, at Berytus; St. Simon the Canaanite, who became Bishop of Jerusalem after St. James, and finished his days there at the age of a hundred and twenty; and St. Matthias, who occupied himself in the same quarter, and there died and was buried. Origen assigns to St. Thomas and St. Andrew the same districts respectively for their missions, but is silent as to their untimely ends, as he also is with regard to those of St. Bartholomew and St. Philip.[2] Moreover, when replying to the objection of Celsus, that so little were the com-

[1] Appendix ad Hippolyti Opera, p. 30. Περὶ τῶν δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων.

[2] Origen, Comment. in Genesin, vol. ii. p. 24.

panions of Jesus impressed by his teaching, and so far were they from dying with Him or suffering for Him, they actually denied Him, he only mentions in vindication of them the deaths of Peter and of James the brother of John, and the sufferings boldly undergone by the Apostles in general.[1] Neither is the sanguinary catalogue thus set forth in the reputed work of Hippolytus confirmed by Eusebius, who enumerates many of the writings of that author, amongst which this document, from its brevity, would scarcely be supposed to find a place. He adds, however, that there were very many more in the possession of one person or another,[2] and it is possible that, amongst these latter, the catalogue in question might exist. At the same time it must be confessed that Chrysostom seems to have had no knowledge of the facts thus affirmed by Hippolytus. "Tell me," says he, in a homily on the Epistle to the Hebrews,[3] "do not the bones of Moses lie in a strange land, as well as those of Aaron, of Daniel, and of Jeremiah? neither can we tell where many of the Apostles repose. The sepulchres of Peter, Paul, John, and Thomas, are notorious, it is true; but of the rest, many as they were, not one is known. But let us not make this a matter for lamentation, nor be faint-hearted for this; for let us be buried where we will, the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."[4]

With respect to the portion of the world covered by the travels of the Apostles, the impression on the mind of Eusebius appears to be, that they never exceeded certain moderate limits; the plan of dispersing the Gospel, in the first instance, having been, as I have argued all along, to give it a firm footing where it was planted, and trust to the force there concentrated under God's blessing for its further expansion. For whilst, on the one hand, the

[1] Contra Cels. ii. § 45.
[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 22.
[3] Chrys. in Heb. xxvi.
[4] Routh, Reliq. Sacr. i. p. 374

ecclesiastical historian describes the Apostles as going forth to teach all nations, when the troubles which came on the Holy Land rendered it no longer safe or useful to remain there;[1] he subsequently tells us, on the other hand, that after the fall of Jerusalem, when provision was to be made for a successor to St. James in the bishopric, the Apostles who survived (and they were many) came together from all parts to assist at that important election, and concurred in fixing on Symeon;[2] as though, however scattered they might be, they still at least had not wandered to the ends of the earth, but were within call when an occasion arose which required that they should assemble themselves together. Neither did this necessity, it may be observed, circumscribe their range within inordinately narrow bounds, bounds inconsistent with the latitude we have already assigned them; for there is no feature more remarkable, or more indicative of the zeal of the early Christian Church, than the great intercourse that appears to have subsisted amongst the founders and teachers of the primitive Churches, separated, though they might be, by what we should even now call, with our wonderfully-improved means of locomotion, very serious distances. Thus St. Paul (as we have seen) when at Rome, thinks little of desiring Timothy, who was probably at Ephesus, to come to him, and bring Mark with him, who was in the same region.[3] Clemens Romanus sends Claudius Ephebus, Valerius Bito, and Fortunatus from Rome to Corinth, to convey his own letter of advice to the Church of Corinth, and bring him word again how it fared.[4] Ignatius does not hesitate to request Polycarp to draw together deputies from the Churches within a reasonable distance of Smyrna, and dispatch one of their company to Antioch, on an errand of good-will to the

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 5.
[2] Ibid. iii. c. 11.
[3] 2 Timothy iv. 11.
[4] Clemens Rom. § 59.

Church of that place.[1] Sotas, a Bishop of Anchialus, in Thrace, travels to Phrygia, to learn on the spot the proceedings of the Montanists, who prevailed in those parts.[2] Irenæus proceeded from Asia Minor and the neighbourhood of Smyrna to Lyons, where he settled himself as a Christian teacher, and at a later period of his life he travelled from Lyons to Rome, on an embassy from the Church of Lyons to Eleutherus, then Bishop of Rome.[3] Cyprian sends Caldonius and Fortunatus from Carthage to Rome to witness the consecration of Cornelius to that see,[4] and in return receives messengers from Rome with tidings from that Church; and indeed the writings of Cyprian are full of examples of this kind of intercourse carried on between remote portions of Christendom.

On the whole, then, it may be considered that the Apostles having received instructions with respect to the manner of founding and establishing the Churches from their Lord Himself, to a much greater extent than the mere words of Scripture literally interpreted may seem to imply, having had their memory of those instructions refreshed, and the method of realising them demonstrated by the Comforter, continued in the capital of the Holy Land, all of them for many years, several of them for the whole or the greater part of their lives, carrying into vigorous effect those principles within a certain range of Jerusalem; and that when at length they extended their radius, and pushed their operations further into the world, they still cut out for themselves only such a circuit as they could occupy effectually; and that thus, before they were all removed, they had constructed their work so substantially, set up so many Christian communities, with

[1] Ignat. Ep. ad Polycarp, § 7.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 19; see Reliq. Sacr. i. p. 496, and note, p. 476.

[3] Irenæus, Fragm. Ep. ad Florinum; Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 4.

[4] Cyprian, Ep. 41.

all the necessary appointments and appliances so completely, interlaced them so compactly, repeated one and the same plan in each of them with such uniformity, that nothing was wanting but willing hands, who would carry on, under God, the vast design, be true to the lines these master-builders had laid down, and rear the superstructure which they had provided for, and indeed anticipated.

CHAPTER IV.

The Apostles' selection of Persons to superintend the Churches, Timothy, Titus, Polycarp, St. Mark, Linus, Epaphroditus, Dionysius.—The manner of Appointment.—The Succession in the Churches at Jerusalem.—Antioch.—Rome.—Alexandria.—The early Organization of the Church.

WHEN the place of Judas had to be supplied, the Apostles were governed in their choice of a successor by the consideration that he must be "one of those men which had companied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus had gone in and out among them." A similar rule now guided them in their selection of those who were to superintend the Churches when they should themselves be no more. The persons to whom they bequeathed their charge, were in general those who had been associated with them, and trained for the work by themselves. Timothy had heard the things which he had to teach others of St. Paul,[1] and he was appointed Bishop of Ephesus. Titus was instructed to exhort, to silence, to rebuke, according as he had been taught of the same Apostle,[2] and he was intrusted with the Church of Crete. Polycarp had consorted with St. John and other of the Apostles, and delighted in recounting to the people their sayings, as well as in making report of the deeds and doctrines of the Lord,[3] and he was appointed by one or other of them (probably by St. John himself) Bishop of

[1] 2 Timothy ii. 2.
[2] Titus i. 9.
[3] Irenæus, Fragm.

Smyrna, and might be the Angel of that Church addressed in the Revelation.[1] St. Mark, as we have seen, was in constant communication with St. Peter and St. Paul, and was, consequently, most entirely conversant with their ways, and he received the rule of the Church of Alexandria, and stood at the head of its bishops.[2] Linus was one of the companions of St. Paul, in his latter days at least,[3] and he was constituted Bishop of Rome after the death of the Apostolical Founders. And here we may remark, that so eminent a Church as that of Rome almost immediately proved itself, would not be committed to feeble hands; so that, however we may have accustomed ourselves to regard Timothy and Titus as occupying the foremost places amongst the successors of the Apostles, naturally led to this conclusion by possessing Epistles which St. Paul addressed to them, whereas to Linus and others about him he addressed none, yet these latter may have been no less conspicuous followers of him than they; no less trustworthy overseers of the flock; the importance of the Churches some of them were placed in charge of, as I have said, strongly confirming this estimate of them. Clemens was another of the fellow-labourers of the same Apostle;[4] another, therefore, of those who would be able "to bring the people into remembrance of his ways, as he taught everywhere in every Church;"[5] and he followed Linus after an interval, as Bishop of the same Church of Rome.[6] Epaphroditus was another "companion in labours and fellow-soldier" of St. Paul, and he was sent by him to preside over the Church of Philippi, for when writing to the Philippians he designates him not as "your messenger,"[7] as our transla-

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 36.
[2] Ibid. ii. c. 16.
[3] 2 Timothy iv. 21.
[4] Philipp. iv. 3.
[5] 1 Cor. iv. 17.
[6] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 4.
[7] Philipp. ii. 25.

tion has it, but your Apostle (ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον), which accounts for the salutation to that Church running, "Paul and Timotheus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons." The Ἀπόστολος in this instance being the Superior, the ἐπίσκοποι the Presbyters, the διάκονοι the Deacons. Dionysius the Areopagite was another associate of St. Paul; I say associate, for so much appears to be implied by the expression that he was of those who "clave unto him,"[1] and he was in his turn appointed Bishop of Athens, by the imposition, it is believed, of St. Paul's own hands, and died a martyr.[2] Zacchæus, who, probably, after his call, attached himself to the Apostles, is said to have been ordained Bishop of Cæsarea by St. Peter.[3] Papias made it a point to inquire what were the declarations of the Elders, what was said by Andrew, Peter, or Philip, by Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord, and he became Bishop of Hierapolis, probably as successor of Philip, for there Philip died.[4] Irenæus treasured up in his memory whatever he had heard from Polycarp, or correlatively from that "certain Elder" who had received his doctrine from those who had conversed with the Apostles, perhaps Pothinus,[5] and he was chosen Bishop of Lyons. And if the catalogues of the chief rulers of all the early Churches had come down to us, as those of the principal ones have done, and as all might have done, had but the Church Historians been aware of the eventual worth of such records (which they were not[6]), we should doubtless have found many more of the names involved in the salutations

[1] Acts xvii. 34.
[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 4.
[3] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, i. p. 283, quotes Ruffinus, Præf. in Recogn. Clement.
[4] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 36. 39.
[5] Irenæus, iv. c. 45. 47.
[6] See Ibid. iii.

of the apostolical Epistles and other passages of the Canonical Scriptures, presenting themselves to us as heads of Churches; such names being of themselves vouchers for the identity of the regulations which governed them constantly from the first, and of the perpetuity of those regulations likely to ensue. Those who held the first rank in the Apostolical succession, as Eusebius tells us, building up the Churches on the foundations which the Apostles had laid; and in their turn appointing others in their own stead, to continue the work.[1] The manner in which these appointments were made was solemn and ceremonial; and though all the minute details of a consecration in the Primitive Church may not be forthcoming, and must indeed wait for their full and explicit development till a somewhat later age supplies documents more abundant and complete, yet sufficient is known to give proof that the main features of the Ritual, such as they afterwards turned out, were fixed from the beginning.

The first consecration of all, after our Lord's departure, that of Matthias, was perhaps an exceptional case, and governed by a law of its own; the appeal being made, under circumstances out of the common, directly to God Himself: and God Himself directly responding to it, and appointing Matthias to the Apostleship, as our Lord Himself had appointed, without the intervention of any other party. Mosheim, indeed, is disposed to take another view of even this instance, and to see in it the elements of future elections to high stations in the Ministry of the Church. "They," that is, the Apostles, says he, "set apart two persons, Justus and Matthias, proposing one or other to the whole assembly, as a substitute for Judas, but leaving the choice of either to itself. The members of the assembly, after prayer made, and supplication to God offered for a right direction of their minds,

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 36, 37.

gave their votes, and the office fell to Matthias."[1] But however we may determine concerning this construction of the passage in the Acts, the main features of future ordinations, though still undeveloped, are certainly discoverable in those effected by St. Paul. Thus, the appointment of Timothy to a bishopric, though originated and perfected by the Apostle himself, has all the appearance of having been an overt proceeding, approved by the congregation, priests and people concurring in it. "Prophecies" went before on him;[2] that is, the whole Church was moved to beg for grace to descend on him, according to their prayers. He "made a good profession before many witnesses;"[3] that is, he publicly avowed his determination to serve God, in the solemn office he was accepting, well and faithfully. St. Paul the Apostle put his hands on him, conferring on him the gift of the Holy Ghost.[4] The Presbyters united with St. Paul in this act, as co-partners in the work.[5] By the time of Cyprian, the outline thus sketched out is filled up in detail, and the several ingredients of the rite are, the *co-episcoporum consensio*, the *clericorum testimonium*, the *populi suffragium*, and the *divinum judicium;* the agreement of the Bishops, the approval of the clergy, the suffrage of the people, and the Divine call.[6] The rule of the Apostolical Constitutions is to the same effect. The Bishop solemnly in-

[1] Mosh. de Rebus Christianis, p. 78. Mosheim considers that ἔβαλον κλήρους, and not ἔδωκαν would have been the phrase, had it been meant to say that they cast lots. Certainly διδόναι κλήρους is used in the Apost. Const. viii. c. 5, in a prayer for the bishop that he may have authority to remit sins; . . . διδόναι κλήρους to appoint to clerical offices according to this institution. In this chapter (i) of the Acts, κλῆρος has repeatedly the sense of clerical office. Thus ver. 17, καὶ ἔλαχε τὸν κλῆρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης, and again, ver. 25.

[2] 1 Timothy i. 18.

[3] Ibid. vi. 12.

[4] 2 Timothy i. 6.

[5] 1 Timothy iv. 14.

[6] Cyprian, Ep. 55, p. 82, et alibi; see Ep. 52, p. 72; 53, p. 76; 52, p. 68; 55, p. 82.

quires of the presbyters and people thrice, whether the party proposed to him for consecration is worthy; and, on assurance of this being given, he, with two other Bishops, proceeds to prayers and the completion of the ordinance.[1] It will be seen that in this ceremonial, and the same may be said of the ordination of the inferior clergy, the priests and *people* are associated with the bishops;[2] but it must be borne in mind, that the latter were all persons "stedfast in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers," embittered by no dissent, embarrassed by no politics; and it will be found, if we trace the several stages in the process of obtaining Holy Orders in our own Church at this day, and examine the Ordination and Consecration Services, that the same primitive principles are carefully preserved; and that it requires only a prudent resolution, and a sense of their respective responsibilities on the part of all concerned in the administration, to reduce those principles to practice more and more effectually.

But I am forestalling the consecutive course of my narrative, to which it is time to revert.

We are now in a condition to follow the ordinance thus established through the generation next to the Apostles. St. Paul had empowered Timothy to commit to faithful men in his turn the trust assigned to him.[3] No doubt he dealt by all other bishops of his own appointment as he did by Timothy. Other Apostles acted in their respective provinces as St. Paul did in his; and the ministerial succession in the several Churches sprang, in all cases, in the first instance from one of them. "Our Apostles," says Clemens, in a passage, a part of which I have already had occasion to quote, "learned through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be disputes on the

[1] Apostol. Constit. viii. c. 4.
[2] Cyprian, Ep. 24, p. 33; 33, p. 46; 35, p. 49; 68, p. 119.
[3] 2 Timothy ii. 2.

subject of the Episcopacy; for which cause, as they had perfect foreknowledge, so did they appoint such persons as I have described (*i. e.* bishops and priests), and give it them in charge to see that when they should themselves fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration. We hold it, therefore, unjust" (he continues, in reference to the contention that was then going on in the Church of Corinth), "that those who had been appointed by them, or subsequently by other chosen men, with the approval and consent of the whole Church, after they had served the flock of Christ blamelessly and in humility, quietly and without grudging, and when all had borne testimony to their work for a long time, should be ejected from their ministry. For it will be no trivial sin laid to our account if we turn out of their bishoprics those who have made the oblations reverently and without blame."[1] Clemens, though here speaking expressly of the circumstances of the Church of Corinth, indirectly makes us acquainted with the organization of all the Churches, and exhibits their functions as carried on continually by a ministerial succession, of which the Apostles were the root; that which was true of one Church being equally true of every other. And, in fact, the very same pedigree is assigned to all the Churches throughout the world by Eusebius, who contents himself with tracing it in a few only, as the necessary documents fall in his way.[2] Thus the bishops of the Church of Jerusalem were as follows:—the first, James; the second, Symeon; the third, Justus; the fourth, Zacchæus; the fifth, Tobias; the sixth, Benjamin; the seventh, John; the eighth, Matthias; the ninth, Philip; the tenth, Seneca; the eleventh, Justus; the twelfth, Levi; the thirteenth, Ephres; the fourteenth, Joseph; and the fifteenth and last before the

[1] Clemens, Ep. § 44.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 37.

fall of Jerusalem, and the expulsion of the Jews by Adrian, Judas.[1] On the repeopling of the city with a Gentile population, its reduction to a Roman colony, and change of name to Ælia,[2] the Church sustained no interruption in the Apostolical succession of its bishops, only they were no longer of the circumcision: Marcus being the sixteenth, Cassianus the seventeenth, Publius the eighteenth, Maximus the nineteenth, Julianus the twentieth, Caius the twenty-first, Symmachus the twenty-second, Caius the 2nd the twenty-third, Julianus the twenty-fourth, Capito the twenty-fifth, Maximus the twenty-sixth, Antoninus the twenty-seventh,[3] Valens the twenty-eighth, Dolichianus the twenty-ninth, Narcissus the thirtieth; this last contemporary with Eusebius himself, who finds this catalogue in the archives of the Church of Jerusalem, and transfers it to his own pages.[4]

The succession in the Church of Antioch is in like manner preserved to us by the same invaluable historian, though we have to search through his book for the several links of the chain, the annals of the Church of Antioch itself having supplied him with the material. Euodius was the first in the series from the Apostles, Ignatius the second,[5] Heron the third,[6] Cornelius the fourth, Eros the fifth, Theophilus the sixth,[7] Maximinus the seventh,[8] Serapion the eighth,[9] Asclepiades the ninth,[10] Philetus the tenth,[11] Zebinus the eleventh,[12] Babylas the twelfth,[13] Fabius the thirteenth,[14] Dèmetrianus the four-

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 5.
[2] Ibid. iv. c. 6.
[3] Maximus and Antoninus, inserted in the text of v. c. 12, from the Chronicon of Euseb.: see note *in loc.*
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid. iii. c. 22.
[6] Ibid. iii. c. 36.
[7] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 20.
[8] Ibid. iv. c. 24.
[9] Ibid. v. c. 22.
[10] Ibid. vi. c. 11.
[11] Ibid. vi. c. 21.
[12] Ibid. vi. c. 23.
[13] Ibid. vi. c. 29.
[14] Ibid. vi. c. 39.

teenth,[1] Paul of Samosata the fifteenth,[2] excommunicated by a council of bishops, priests, and deacons, and followed by Domnus the sixteenth,[3] Timæus the seventeenth,[4] Cyrillus the eighteenth, who was contemporary with Eusebius.[5]

The succession of the Church of Rome is recorded with the same diligence, not a link in the series, from the Apostles to Eusebius' own time, lost: Linus being the first bishop, Anacletus the second, Clement the third, Evarestus the fourth, Alexander the fifth, Xystus the sixth, Telesphorus the seventh, Hyginus the eighth, Pius the ninth, Anicetus the tenth, Soter the eleventh, Eleutherus the twelfth,[6] Victor the thirteenth,[7] Zephyrinus the fourteenth,[8] Callistus the fifteenth,[9] Urbanus the sixteenth,[10] Pontianus the seventeenth,[11] Anteros the eighteenth, Fabianus the nineteenth,[12] Cornelius the twentieth,[13] Lucius the twenty-first,[14] Stephanus the twenty-second,[15] Xystus the twenty-third,[16] Dionysius the twenty-fourth,[17] Felix the twenty-fifth,[18] Eutychianus the twenty-sixth, Caius the twenty-seventh, Marcellinus the twenty-eighth,[19] who again brought the series down to the age of Eusebius.

The succession in the Church of Alexandria, beginning from St. Mark, is given step by step in Eusebius in the same uninterrupted course as before, and has to be gathered out of his history piece-meal as before:—Annianus

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 46; vii. c. 14.
[2] Ibid. vii. c. 27.
[3] Ibid. vii. c. 30.
[4] Ibid. vii. c. 32.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid. v. c. 6.
[7] Ibid. v. c. 22.
[8] Ibid. v. c. 28.
[9] Ibid. vi. c. 21.
[10] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 21.
[11] Ibid. vi. c. 23.
[12] Ibid. vi. c. 29.
[13] Ibid. vi. c. 39.
[14] Ibid. vii. c. 2.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid. vii. c. 5.
[17] Ibid. vii. c. 27.
[18] Ibid. vii. c. 30.
[19] Ibid. vii. c. 32.

the first bishop,[1] Avilius the second,[2] Cerdon the third,[3] Primus the fourth,[4] Justus the fifth,[5] Eumenes the sixth,[6] Marcus the seventh, Celadion the eighth,[7] Agrippinus the ninth,[8] Julianus the tenth,[9] Demetrius the eleventh,[10] Heraclas the twelfth,[11] Dionysius the thirteenth,[12] Maximinus the fourteenth,[13] (called also Maximus,[14]) Theonas the fifteenth, Peter the sixteenth,[15] the last landing us once more in the times of Eusebius, who follows up the mention of this name with the remark, that "having thus given the succession (of the bishops) from the birth of our Saviour to the demolition of the Churches, a period embracing three hundred and five years," he would now betake himself to write the history of the persecution which ensued.[16]

I have produced these instances of catalogues of primitive bishops duly preserved in the registers of the Churches, in all their details, though having to pick them out of the pages of Eusebius, as the several names present themselves in the course of the narrative, in order to impress on the minds of my readers more vividly the fact, that such concatenation there undoubtedly was; and that evidence of it which would have satisfied a court, if necessary, could have been produced. Meanwhile the cases of these Churches are not exceptional ones; on the contrary, there was not a Church in which the same process was not going on. Eusebius, without recording formal lists of a similar kind in each, is constantly naming one or other as the bishop of this Church

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 14.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. iii. c. 21.
[4] Ibid. iv. c. 1.
[5] Ibid. iv. c. 4.
[6] Ibid. iv. c. 5.
[7] Ibid. iv. c. 11.
[8] Ibid. iv. c. 19.
[9] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 9.
[10] Ibid. v. c. 22.
[11] Ibid. vi. c. 26.
[12] Ibid. vi. c. 35.
[13] Ibid. vii. c. 28.
[14] Ibid. vii. c. 32.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

or that at a given date, at a particular crisis, or under a particular emperor. And Irenæus, on one occasion, when engaged in opposing the orthodox tradition of the Church Catholic to the novelties of the Heretics, measures that tradition by the faith and practice of the Churches, which, founded by the Apostles, had been ever since watched over by bishops who were successors of the Apostles down to his own day, selecting, however, for his argument the instance of the Church of Rome, both because of its conspicuous character, and "because it would be very tedious in such a work as this," says he, "to *enumerate the successions in all the Churches*,"[1] manifestly intimating that the materials for tracing the succession in every Church were to be found; that there was not one which had not been governed by this regimen, and that was not in a condition to state the details of it from its archives. And it was in the first few centuries, be it observed, when the succession was exposed to the greatest danger of disruption and discontinuance; the Churches then comparatively few, the bishops for a time limited in number, so that they might not be able to assemble in any great force at the consecration of a brother, and the thread, by which the continuance of the line was maintained, might be more readily snapped; but very soon that thread became a cord, a cord of many strands, so that even a defect in one could not materially damage the whole, other strands holding even if a single one failed. For before long, ecclesiastical canons were passed, absolutely requiring the participation of several bishops in the act of Consecration. The Apostolical Constitutions, as we have seen, enact not less than three, at the same time contemplating the probable presence of many more;[2] and the fourth canon of the Council of Nice the same, a number, as we may gather from

[1] Irenæus, iii. c. 3, § 2.

[2] Constit. viii. c. 4.

Cyprian, very far below that which did, in fact, usually congregate on these interesting occasions.

It is a vulgar error to suppose that the middle ages were times of ecclesiastical anarchy and confusion. Whatever might be the civil or political convulsions of those times, the religious principle continued dominant throughout them; institutions based on this principle lived and prospered; and customs, calculated to sustain it, were cherished with care and affection. It is impossible to read the documents collected together in the "De Catholicæ Ecclesiæ Divinis Officiis," comprising papers of Isidore, Albinus, Amalarius, Walafridus, Berno, Damianus, Hildebertus, extending from the beginning of the seventh to the thirteenth century, in which are preserved memoranda of the functions and services of the Church during that period, without being struck with the reflection, how steadily religion held its course throughout the whole of it; how calmly its offices proceeded from generation to generation, unharmed, undisturbed, except so far as they might suffer change or corruption from the Church itself; and whilst dynasties were dissolved and kingdoms lost and won, and the world rang with arms and deeds of violence, the Church lived more than unmolested, her rites administered in the main after the same forms, her Liturgy essentially one, her hierarchy the same; so that the succession, already bequeathed to that epoch by the Primitive Church, as an apostolical ordinance in full effect, was altogether unlikely in such an age to suffer violence or derangement or neglect; as unlikely, at the very least, as it would be in our own irreverent and utilitarian one. Indeed, it may not, perhaps, be too much to say, that this epoch might be studied with advantage by the stirring spirits of our own time, and a moral drawn from it, that, however it may be within the reach of politicians to ruffle the surface of the

world, to destroy temporal and secular arrangements, and shake to the foundations the several orders of society, their own amongst the number; still the Church, whose roots strike deeper, will live in spite of them, and rise again unsubdued to testify against them when they and their tyranny shall be overpast.

I will conclude this chapter with enforcing once more the remark which I made before entering upon this department of my History; that we are not to wonder at the complete organization of the Church in very early times, much earlier than is generally supposed; seeing that the Apostles planted their Churches so deliberately; were themselves, in many cases, at hand to superintend them and the incidents which might require regulation in them for so long a season; and in all cases were so careful to limit their field to a reasonable compass; and, this done, were no less painstaking to devolve their office upon others whom they had made fully conversant with their own plans, and who were even still more closely confined to their respective walks than themselves, in proportion as their districts were better marked out, and the calls on them within those districts more constant and pressing.

CHAPTER V.

Elements at work in the spread of the Gospel.—The Kingdom of God springing and growing up as the Seed.—The Impression made on the Heathen byt he Conduct and Manner of Life of the Christians.—Their Order and Sobriety amid the Excesses which prevailed.—Admiration excited by the Sufferings of the Martyrs.

HAVING now described the broad features of the Church, as a body organized by God for the reduction of the world to Christianity, and having contemplated its direct action, let us turn our attention to other elements at work in the dispersion of the Gospel; under God's providence, accessory and subordinate helps in the great cause, not the less effectual, perhaps, because hidden and unobtrusive.

Undoubtedly, the brunt of the battle lay with the Apostles and the successors of the Apostles, the hierarchy they established, the company of preachers they dispersed and located, the institutions they called into being and animated; the practical system, in short, which they reared, upheld, and bequeathed as an immortal legacy to the world. But much was nevertheless done indirectly, incidentally, and out of the ordinary course. It is true that in some cases Satan was seen to fall from heaven as lightning. But in many others the kingdom of God came not with observation. The Samaritans were converted by Philip in the ordinary manner by sermons and miracles; but the Eunuch, as he was riding in his chariot, fell in with him, too, and was made a Christian; all

Æthiopia, perhaps, sharing in the consequences. It was not the intention of St. Paul, as far as we know, to plant the Cross in Melita. But he being driven ashore by the tempest, it so came to pass; the remote results of this incident probably much more considerable than appears, for the intercourse between Melita and Africa was intimate, the island, then, as now, being supplied with corn from that quarter—it was a ship of Alexandria that had wintered in the isle which gave St. Paul a passage—the barbarous people of Melita (barbarous, inasmuch as they spoke the Phœnician language of Africa, and not Greek, for otherwise they seem to have been truly civilised [1]) being very well qualified to spread the report of St. Paul's teaching amongst their countrymen on the mainland. It was an accident, as popular language would express it, which threw Onesimus in the way of St. Paul. He was a runaway slave, who, perhaps, led by curiosity to visit the Apostle in prison, or perhaps, wanting a friend and adviser, and hearing of his benevolent character, sought him out; but, whatever was the moving cause in the first instance, a convert to Christ he became, a faithful emissary of St. Paul to distant brethren; [2] and, probably, in the end a bishop of the Church.[3] Our Lord's words constantly recur to us, whilst we are upon this topic, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." [4] Justin Martyr had not his thoughts turned to the Gospel by any formal appeal to him, but (as he tells his own tale to Trypho the Jew) happened to meet with an old man near the coast, as he was musing on Plato in solitude,

[1] Biscoe on the Acts, p. 46.
[2] Col. iv. 9.
[3] Berœa in Macedonia, Constit. vii. c. 45.
[4] Mark iv. 26, 27.

who proved to be a Christian, and who, having awakened his curiosity on the subject of the Gospel, left him, and was seen of him no more. But the effect of his casual intercourse remained; he had encountered an angel unawares: and Justin was led by it to inquire and believe, and not only so, but eventually to stand forth as a very eminent champion of the faith, and to plead its cause in the highest quarters. Minucius Felix furnishes another and a very remarkable instance of the same great results proceeding from the same trivial beginnings. The incident, indeed, gives the cast to his little work. He tells us of a conversation of one Octavius, a friend of his and a Christian, whose name supplies the title of his book, with Cæcilius, a heathen, which had vividly impressed itself on his memory, and which ended in the conversion of Cæcilius. Cæcilius had been paying a visit to Minucius at Rome. After talking over old times for a while, they, together with Octavius, adjourned to Ostia, for sea-bathing; Minucius not very well, and the vacation, for he was a lawyer, having closed the courts, and set him at liberty.[1] As they were pacing the shore, Cæcilius, in passing, saluted an image of Serapis; Octavius (who, like Minucius, was a Christian) observing that a good man ought not to allow his friend and companion to continue in such darkness. Meanwhile they pursued their walk, stopping, however, where the boats were drawn up on the beach, to watch some boys who were playing at ducks and drakes at the water's edge. Minucius, perceiving that Cæcilius was silent and thoughtful, inquired the cause. He had been galled by the remark of Octavius. So far from admitting that he was in ignorance, he was prepared to debate the subject of revelation, and accordingly threw down the challenge. Upon this, they all seat themselves on the Mole; the

[1] Minucius, § 2.

dialogue proceeds, and ends, as I have said, in the conversion of Cæcilius to Christianity.

Nothing can be more natural, or more according to the common course of events, than these encounters. For even if we suppose the Dialogues of Justin or of Minucius to have been rhetorical exercises, we must still regard the structure of the compositions as consistent with the events of the day; Cæcilius, Octavius, or Trypho, fictitious characters, if you will, and the debates imaginary; but drawn according to life, consistent with scenes which actually occurred. But what happened to Justin or Cæcilius might happen to hundreds or thousands; and thus souls might be added to the Church daily, by agents who had no formal commission to win them, and who found themselves involved in the work of propagating the Gospel, without the slightest intention of it on their own part.

Nor was this all. The very nature of Christianity, when once introduced into a country, was such as to excite attention and awake curiosity. Christians were a body of men so singular in their ways, presenting so many particulars in contrast to the manners of the citizens they lived amongst, that it was impossible their principles should not become matter for investigation, their practices matter for observation and comment. Even in our own day, the peculiarities of a sect lead at once to inquiry after its character and constitution. How quickly and extensively, for instance, was the knowledge of George Fox and the Quakers dispersed, when it was perceived that, in many respects, their carriage was different from that of the world at large. The early Christians, however they might wish it, could not conceal themselves effectually; even any attempt at doing so would only surround them with additional mystery, which would provoke a greater desire to penetrate it. If the

Jews were perplexed by the Christians, because they "changed the customs," as they said, "walked not after the customs," and if they were accordingly disposed to watch them with jealousy, and look narrowly after their doings, how much more the Gentiles. These two parties, the Christian and the heathen, could have few things in common. The Christians found difficulty in resorting to the same tribunals as the heathen. They could not take the heathen oaths.[1] "Dare any of you," writes St. Paul to the Corinthians, for already was the inconvenience making itself felt—"dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?"[2] By the same rule they were embarrassed about executing deeds, bonds, and contracts, and were consequently scarcely in a condition to borrow or lend.[3] They could not reconcile themselves to the profession of arms; or, if so, to bear them like other men. The eagles were idols which the legions worshipped, and by which they swore allegiance.[4] The chaplets which the soldiers received as badges of honour, the Christians could hardly wear, because they were also regarded as trappings of idolatry.[5] If they carried them in their hand, as some of them did, instead of twining them about their brows, they betrayed at once their scruples and their creed. They could not be content to mount guard upon heathen temples, knowing, as they did, that those temples were mere brothels in disguise.[6] They would be observed, too, to evade the office of schoolmaster, for how could they teach the lying and loathsome adventures of the heathen gods, whilst those gods were still in the ascendant, and objects of faith with the multitudes?

[1] Tertullian, De Idololat. § 17.
[2] 1 Cor. vi. 1.
[3] Tertullian, De Idololat. § 23.
[4] Ibid. Apolog. § 16.
[5] De Coronâ, § 1. 11.
[6] Tertullian, Apolog. § 15; De Idololat. § 10.

How could they keep the festivals of Flora, and dedicate to Minerva the firstfruits of their stipend? They would be observed to be equally fastidious about sending their children to the common schools, for could they fail of being corrupted by the literature which would be laid before them?[1] Nay, it would be perceived that even in quieting their infants they would studiously abstain from the usual bugbears of the nursery, nor call to the aid of cradle discipline the powers of their mythology.[2] They would be remarked as having scruples respecting certain articles of ordinary traffic, such as incense, because it served chiefly for the uses of the temples; and butchers' meat, because much of it was destined for the altars.[3] Their absence from those temples and altars, as a matter of course, would be obvious; indeed, matter of such notoriety was it, as to awake the anxious attention of the chief magistrates, who saw with alarm the revenues of the shrines, which were farmed by the Government to the highest bidder, like our toll-bars, rapidly decline under the large defection of the Christians.[4] Whilst the popular cry was, "Give us bread and the games, and it is enough," the Christians would be noticed as altogether withdrawing themselves from the theatre, the stadium, and the arena.[5] The same abstinence would be noted in them, for this, too, was opposed to ordinary usage, with respect to public executions[6] and promiscuous baths.[7] They would be remarked as refusing to buy for their table, at the shambles, flesh which had been offered to idols.[8] They would be seen, when guests at the feasts of others, to behave themselves differently from

[1] Tertullian, De Idololat. § 10; Justin Mart. 1 Apolog. § 21.

[2] Clemens Alexandr.

[3] Tertullian, De Idololat. § 11.

[4] Ibid. Apolog. § 42; Pliny, Ep. x. 97.

[5] Tertullian, Apolog. § 35; De Spectac. § 18, and passim.

[6] Athenagoras, Leg. § 35.

[7] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. iii. c. 5, p. 273.

[8] Minucius, § 38.

the company in general; they would not indulge on those occasions in the same decorations, or the same perfumes.[1] They would wear no garlands; nor summon the servants by the unseemly methods then in use; distinguishing themselves, in short, from others, not merely by order and sobriety, amidst the shocking excesses and revelries that prevailed, but by attention to all the minor decencies and proprieties of the table.[2] For it is observable how closely the refinements of society, even in things indifferent as to their morality, followed in the wake of the Gospel. They would be perceived to find many cases of conscience presenting themselves, and much discrimination necessary, with regard to attendance at marriages, at the ceremonies of giving a name, or of assuming the toga,[3] matters of daily occurrence, and naturally productive of constant speculation and remark. The Christian women would be seen, with suspicion perhaps, to be more modest in their apparel than others of their own rank; no shoes would be worn by them, at least, studded with meretricious legends.[4] Even the rings and the seals of the Christians would have devices different from the common, and such as might be construed into a moral—a dove, a fish, a ship under sail, a lyre, an anchor.[5] Neither would they be the persons to be discovered amongst the idlers at taverns, shops, or amongst the gamesters at dice and dominos.[6] Nor is this all. Tertullian, who writes a Treatise to dissuade his wife, in case of his death, from a second marriage; but, above all, from a second marriage contracted with a heathen, puts the same case in other lights. The believing wife wishes to attend a prayer-meeting, the unbelieving husband proposes a bath;

[1] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. ii. c. 8, pp. 205. 213.
[2] Ibid. p. 213; c. 7, p. 204.
[3] Tertullian, De Idololat. § 16.
[4] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. ii. c. 11, p. 240.
[5] Ibid. iii. c. 11, p. 289.
[6] Ibid. p. 297.

she is for a fast, he for a dinner-party. She would go from shed to shed, and from cabin to cabin, in charitable search of her fellow Christians; he puts a veto at once upon all such proceedings. He will not allow her to rise from his bed to take part in the night watches, or even to solemnise the Easter festival. He has his suspicions of the character of the Lord's Supper, and forbids her resort to it. He will not consent to her approaching the martyrs in prison, or washing the feet of the saints, or providing food for a sick brother.[1] Perhaps she attempts to conceal the fact of her being a Christian. It is in vain. What can she mean, thinks he to himself, by signing her couch, her person, with the Cross—by puffing away the fumes of his incense or offering? Is it to practise magic that she thus rises in the night? Is it simply bread that she tastes, before partaking of any other food?[2] It is impossible to read evidence of this kind, of the incongruity which subsisted between the manners, feelings, tastes of the Christians and heathen—and such evidence abounds—without being satisfied that the curiosity excited by the mysterious peculiarities of the new sect was intense, and must have been instrumental, in a very great degree, in spreading throughout the world a knowledge of the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel, and the characteristics of the Church.

There was another circumstance, which, in the same indirect way, proved a very effective trumpet to sound the alarm of the new religion—a circumstance I shall have to dwell upon at greater length hereafter; and that was, the persecution the Christians were compelled to undergo on account of their confession. The heathen could not stand by and witness the heroic constancy with which multitudes of both sexes and of all ages took their death, without being greatly struck by the spec-

[1] Tertullian, Ad Uxor. ii. § 4. | [2] Ibid. § 5.

tacle, without being led to investigate the nature of a principle which imparted such extraordinary force, self-possession, and endurance of pain, to those who were animated by it. "We spring up, and increase in number," is the indignant apostrophe of Tertullian, "in proportion as you cut us down. The blood of the Christians is the seed of the Christians. Many amongst yourselves exhort to patience under pain and death, Cicero in his Tusculans, Seneca in his Chances, Diogenes, Pyrrho, Callinicus,—yet they do not win half so many converts by words, as the Christians, who teach by deeds. This very obstinacy of the Christians, which you denounce, is itself a teacher. For who can contemplate it, and not be moved to inquire what there is in this matter at bottom? Who can inquire, and not be drawn towards it? Who be drawn towards it, and not himself feel a desire to suffer?"[1] We are in possession of some graphic accounts of the remarks made by heathen bystanders on these scenes; remarks, which, says Cyprian, who records them, "forcibly inspired him with the thought, that there was something wonderfully affecting, wonderfully majestic, in the sight of anguish borne without a flinch. The man has children, I believe—a wife he has, for certain—and yet he is not unnerved by these ties of flesh and blood; he is not turned from his purpose by these claims of affection. We must look into the affair—we must get at the root of it. Be it what it may, it can be no trifle which makes one ready and willing to die for it."[2] Accordingly, Justin Martyr tells us, that this constancy of the Christians under the severest trials was a circumstance which predisposed him to regard their creed with favour, and though himself at that time devoted to the doctrines of Plato, and in the habit

[1] Tertullian, Apol. § 50.

[2] Cyprian, De Laude Martyrii, pp. 347, 348.

of hearing the Christians denounced, yet, when he saw them unmoved by death, and by every other ordinary terror, he felt that it was impossible such persons could be leading a life of voluptuousness and sin, as they were said to be.[1]

The effect of these spectacles would be the greater, owing to the seasons at which they were usually exhibited; the execution of the Christians taking place, in general, at the celebration of the games and public shows, when multitudes of people were gathered together from all quarters. So was it with Polycarp, at Smyrna; the whole province was a witness of the stout heart and faith unshaken with which this venerable victim met his end; insomuch, that "his fame was spread abroad," we are told, "amongst all the Gentiles."[2] So was it with Ignatius: he was conveyed from Antioch to Rome, to suffer in the capital of the empire, and in its amphitheatre; the escort of soldiers who attended him, eager to arrive at the place of execution before the games should be concluded.[3] It is notorious, that these meetings, whether in Italy or Greece, were centres from which information on all subjects radiated; and we may be sure, that the rising society of the Christians, which was brought into view so prominently and under circumstances so much to its advantage, would be made a topic of discussion, and many a report of them be put in circulation, which would pave the way for the preacher when his turn should come.

[1] Justin Mart. Apol. § 12.
[2] Martyr. Polycarp, § 12. 19.
[3] Martyr. Ignat. § 5.

CHAPTER VI.

A favourable Report of the Christians circulated chiefly by reason of their virtuous and blameless Lives.—Great Beauty of the Precepts in St. Paul's Epistles.—Picture of the Primitive Christian.—Absence of Interference with the World.—The Christian Parent and Master.—Christian Benevolence and Fortitude.

THE medium, however, through which the report of the Christians was the most favourably, and therefore the most effectually circulated, was probably their blameless and virtuous lives.

> "How far that little candle casts its beams!
> So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

Miracles, doubtless, must have had their natural effect in recommending the cause they supported, but mankind were not at that time altogether in a condition to be convinced by the argument of miracles. There were circumstances then abroad, to which I shall hereafter have occasion to advert, a prevailing belief in magic more especially, which, in some degree, neutralised the influence of miracles as evidence of truth. Prophecies literally fulfilled must have had their effect too, not less than the other. But neither could the argument of prophecy produce its proper impression, without an examination of the writings of the Prophets, for which people in general, at least the heathen, were incompetent; and those who were competent were little disposed. But virtue, especially virtue contemplated in action, and exemplified in life, recommends itself to the most savage, or the basest

nature, by a law of our being; and introduces the system, be it what it may, to which it cleaves and which it is seen to accompany, with a silent but most persuasive eloquence. It was the character for piety of the man who is described by the heathen poet as presenting himself to the infuriated multitude as a peace-maker, which awed them into silence, and disposed them to listen to his words. And the manner in which St. Barnabas is, on one occasion, mentioned in the Acts, and the effects there ascribed to his ministry, may be thought to be significant: "He was a *good man*, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people *was added unto the Lord.*"[1]

So mistaken are those who approach the unbeliever in the hope to work his conversion by addressing his understanding only; who consider that the reason only is the faculty of man to which the evidence of the Gospel makes its appeal.

It is not the force of the miracles of which we read in the Gospel, stupendous as they are; nor yet of the predictions which we there find accomplished to the minutest nicety, that produces even now, perhaps, the strongest conviction of the truths they vouch for; but it is the wholesome morality which breathes in every page of it; the manner of spirit it is of; the simple, touching, unaffected terms in which it teaches purity, charity, patience, meekness, temperance; insomuch, that having followed the Apostle Paul, for instance, through the argumentative portion of one of his Epistles, that to the Romans, perhaps, or that to the Ephesians, and having felt and admired the power of his reasoning, we find our conviction of his divine commission growing stronger and stronger as we encounter the cluster of just and righteous precepts with which he usually winds up; and as he pro-

[1] Acts xi. 24.

ceeds without order or arrangement to exclaim, "Let love be without dissimulation; abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good; be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality;" with a profusion of other maxims equally calculated to secure the happiness and peace of all who listen to them,—we instinctively say, that "God is in him of a truth. What further need have we of witness?"

This then was the principle which pleaded the cause of the early Christians so successfully—the quiet influence of character and example. "God hath enjoined us," says Justin, "to withdraw men from shameful and disgraceful passions, by our own meekness. And we can show the effects of this in many instances. Those who were once tyrannical and violent changed in their temper, either by imitating the forbearance manifested in their neighbours, or by observing the unusual patience of their fellow-travellers, when defrauded by the way, or by experiencing the good faith of those with whom they had business to transact."[1] Accordingly, we find Origen telling us that the atrocious calumnies laid to their charge at the first, and then believed by the heathen, had, in his own time, begun to fail in their effect. The Christians, it is true, were still subject to persecution, but they had, at least, already lived down the malicious reports that had been circulated against them.[2] How could it be otherwise? Let us endeavour to call up before us the picture of the primitive Christian; let us collect some of the features of that character, as we gather them out of the writings of pri-

[1] Justin Mart. Apol. § 16.

[2] Origen, Contra Cels. vi. § 27. 40.

mitive authors; and consider whether mankind, constituted as they are, *could* persist in hating it—could find in their hearts not to give it, at least, a fair trial. We have, indeed, in part, forestalled this subject in the last chapter, when speaking of the peculiarities of the Christian, which could not fail to attract attention, for many of those peculiarities could not fail to beget esteem also.

Christians, then, having taken upon themselves certain vows at their baptism, that they would renounce the devil, his pomp, and his angels, were perpetually reminding themselves and each other of the responsibility they had thus incurred.[1] The memento sounded in their ears like the "Remember" of King Charles addressed to the good Bishop on the scaffold, and awoke in them, as the latter did in him, a multitude of thoughts and motives of which the world was not aware. This recall of the Christian to the promises made by him at baptism, as a restraint upon his conduct at all critical moments, is quite a feature in the writings of the early Fathers. Indeed, it is this circumstance which has, in a great measure, preserved to us the forms of Baptism, as administered in the Primitive Church, and enabled us to trace distinctly the language of our own up to the most remote times in the Church's history. Did the Christian doubt whether he might lawfully attend a heathen spectacle? "Think of your pledge," was the reply, "your *renunciation*."[2] Is he tempted to complain when in prison for the truth's sake? "Call to mind the engagement you made as God's soldier, and take heart," is the exhortation.[3] Is he employed in a trade which he now

[1] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 67. Comp. Tertullian, De Spectac. § 24, where the terms of the *Eucharistic* Service are recalled to the memory.

[2] Tertullian, De Spectac. § 4.

[3] Ibid. Ad Martyras, § 3.

finds to be unlawful, and can ill afford the sacrifice the surrender of it requires? "But you undertook to have nothing to do with the devil's service; do not break your word," is the rebuke.[1] Do the offices of the world, its honours, its praise, solicit his acceptance and stagger him? "Remind yourself of your compact; how large were its terms," is the suggestion.[2] Thus the habitual recollection of these pledges told upon the actions of the Christians, to excite, to restrain, or to modify, as it might be. It was a present help in time of need. They became afraid of sullying their baptismal robe, doubtful whether even the Church could restore it to its original whiteness, after wilful defilement. So far were they from regarding Baptism as a mere ceremonial, terminating in itself. Nay, by a change of figure, they enforced this conclusion in a form the most pointed, representing Baptism as a laver, in which Christians, like fishes in the natural water, must perpetually live, if they are to live at all; removal out of the element, in either case, being fatal.[3] They kept a guard on themselves early and late. In the morning, betimes, they resorted to the assembly for common prayer, and, probably, for the reception of the Eucharist—"Give us this day our daily bread," construed by them to have its reference to it.[4] At the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours, they afforded themselves opportunities again of meeting together for devotion. After their evening meal, they returned thanks to God for the blessings of the day, and the protection He had afforded them during the course of it. In the night they woke up to praise Him, not forgetting that the angels are described as "watchers;" and that happy

[1] Tertullian, De Idololat. § 5.
[2] Ibid. De Coronâ, § 13.
[3] Ibid. De Baptismo, § 1.
[4] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. ii. c. 10, p. 228; Cyprian, Ep. 54.

are those servants said to be, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find the same.[1] Traces of those frequent services which soon, if they had not done so already, took an organized form in the Ritual of the Church, are discernible even at a date the most distant; and David's practice, "seven times a day will I praise thee," afterwards so familiarly quoted as the Church's precedent, is already in the mouth of the Christian worshipper.[2] For he was conscious that he had to maintain a perpetual struggle against an evil nature and a corrupt world, and had constantly to seek the help which alone was effectual for enabling him to do it with success; he was persuaded that the spirit was the soul's wings, so he represented it, that, these cast away and lost, it fluttered like an unfledged bird, and fell to the earth.[3] Therefore, it was not to the public services alone that he trusted for gathering to himself strength, but he would sometimes have a psalm chaunted whilst he sat at table, the repast only the more joyous for being thus conducted,[4] and a hymn would serve to cheer him in the hours of his ordinary occupation.[5] Indeed, as he advanced towards perfection, as he became (in the language of the day) the gnostic indeed, he regarded the world more and more as one vast temple, and life as one continued festival, dedicated to the glory of God; and yet there was nothing fanatical in his movements, in his public devotions; there was no undue excitement, as was the case in so many of the heathen solemnities; his prayers were sober, modest, under regulation; his language weighed and premeditated; the Lord's Prayer, unimpassioned as it is, considered by him

[1] Stromat. vii. c. 7, p. 854; Pædag. ii. c. 10, p. 228; ii. c. 9, p. 218.

[2] Stromat. vii. c. 7, p. 851.

[3] Tatian, Orat. Ad Græcos, § 20.

[4] Cyprian, Ep. i. p. 7.

[5] Clemens Alexand. Stromat. vii. c. 7, p. 857.

the compendium of all prayer whatever; and the prayer of Hannah remembered to be effective, though the lips only moved.[1] It was not fanaticism that inspired this dedication of himself to God, so far surpassing anything we now experience, but faith—faith strong in the transmitted testimony of the wonders of the Saviour's life, death, resurrection, and ascension, then comparatively recent events; strong in the recollection of the words and deeds of Apostles, or followers of Apostles, then vivid in the Church, and of the visible outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon them, filling them with virtues: strong in the keen impression of the dangers of the times, the sword ever hanging over the head by a hair, the life ever carried in the hand. These were some of the influences which affected the primitive Christian in a manner peculiar to himself, and made him the intense character he seems to have been. At their meals they partook of the meats set before them with moderation; and in dealing with an invitation from heathens, considered well beforehand what was likely to be the complexion of the entertainment, and accepted or declined it accordingly.[2] They drank little wine, and when they did drink it, chastened themselves with the thought of the sacramental cup.[3] They forbore, as I have said, to decorate their brows with the festive chaplet, for they remembered the crown of thorns.[4] Not only did they denounce the licentious abuses of the bath, but were sparing in its use; the world around them indulging in it to an excess that totally enfeebled and wasted the constitution and frame; and when they did allow themselves in it, it was for cleanliness, and not for luxury, that they did so, associating with

[1] Cyprian, De Orat. Domin. § 2, p. 204.

[2] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. ii. c. 1, p. 167.

[3] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. ii. c. 2, p. 186.

[4] Ibid. ii. c. 8, p. 214.

it in their minds the bath that cleanseth from sin;[1] as they associated with their simple sandal, in contrast to the fashion of the time, the shoe latchet that John declared himself not worthy to unloose.[2] Thus were the daily incidents and implements of life shaped into an allegory; and thus was the Gospel, as yet but newly introduced amongst men, and surrounded by all manner of idolatrous sights, sounds, emblems, and temptations, brought, in its turn, perpetually before the convert in its objective aspect, and wisdom made to approach them through many entrances. The Christians were the most loyal of the Emperor's subjects; they were even passive in their principles of obedience to the prince, whatever his character and conduct to themselves, still yielding him submission; if he was merciful, thanking God for a ruler under whom the Church was allowed to be at rest; if he was cruel, still bowing to God's will, who had sent such a Sovereign for the punishment of their sins; but, in either case, holding him to be God's minister; a weakness, if a weakness, amiable in itself, and calculated to conciliate, at least, the favour of a jealous world, which saw them sustaining their parts with so much meekness and patience—Vincit qui patitur. The Christians were scrupulous in paying their taxes, and in giving every one his due; the unbeliever no less than others.[3] And when Domitian summoned the grandchildren of Jude before him, as descendants of David, in whose line mischief was supposed to lurk, they pleaded, in part, in proof of the innocence of their characters, the taxes they paid out of the labour of their own hands, exhibiting those hands at the same time as callous with toil.[4] And though surrounded by many spies, some of them probably members

[1] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. iii. c. 9, p. 284.

[2] Ibid. ii. c. 11, p. 241.

[3] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 42; Constit. ii. c. 46.

[4] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 20.

of their own households, and with the means of penetrating their utmost privacy, like Judas among the twelve, they were never, by any chance, found in the list of offenders against the laws.[1] They had, indeed, a tribunal of their own, in accordance with the suggestion of the Apostle, who felt it a scandal that Christians should take their quarrels before unbelievers—a tribunal wholly independent of the courts of the country, and, in a great measure, superseding the necessity of any resort to the secular magistrates, and not even admitting the evidence of heathens.[2] Such a process was calculated to stop offences amongst those who submitted to it, long before they became flagrant, to nip them in the bud, and render any interference of official authority recognised in the States, unnecessary. The bishop was the superior in this self-constituted court; the priests and deacons his assessors; these latter, it should seem, determining by vote the merits of the case, the former pronouncing the sentence; a sentence deriving its effect altogether from the voluntary acquiescence of the Christian community, and regulated accordingly; in some instances confined to a mere admonition, in others extended to a fine, to be dispensed among the poor; in others, enjoining a penitential fast; and in others, again, those of more extreme turpitude, reaching to excommunication. Such judicial sessions were held on the Monday, in order to allow time, in case of resistance being offered to the award, for the difficulty to be discussed and abated in the interval before Sunday returned, when all might meet together in the congregation in peace. Independently of all consideration of the elevating properties of Christianity itself, the effect of this self-discipline, established in their own community, must have been to verify the boast and glory of the Christians, of which I have spoken; that their names never appeared

[1] Tertullian, Apol. § 7. 44. | [2] Constit. ii. c. 46.

in the catalogue of criminals; to exhibit them to the world as an innocent body, in a degree that was remarkable—as a sect, who, whatever else might be said of them, were, at least, exemplary members of the Commonwealth, which never took damage from any doings of theirs. And one cannot but perceive that this blameless character of the Christians, as citizens, impressed Pliny, politician as he was, with a certain degree of good-will towards them, and led him to doubt whether it was not hard measure to proceed with severity against those whose main offence was, "to assemble betimes in the morning, chaunt hymns to Christ as their God, and bind themselves by a solemn engagement to be honest and chaste, to keep their word, and redeem their pledge."[1] The Christians were the most careful of parents; this, again, was a feature in their character, which, so far as it was known (for in early times the Christian's life could only be seen through the chinks), was calculated to recommend them and their principles even to a virtuous heathen. No virtuous heathen could contrast the liberty to expose their children, which was permitted amongst his own class, with the solicitude of the Christian to provide for the helpless orphan, and not feel a strong secret preference for the dictate of nature and humanity. No virtuous heathen could contemplate the stain likely to rest upon the mind of his child from the impure lessons of mythology submitted to him in his tender years, in which he himself acquiesced, without some misgivings and latent dissatisfaction. "Maxima debetur pueris reverentia," was even a maxim of his own; nor could he fail to have a respect in his heart for parents, who, at the risk of laying themselves open to the suspicion of being despisers of the gods, removed their boys from what they considered scenes of contamination, and which he would himself feel

[1] Pliny, Ep. x. 97.

to be so in truth, and provided for their instruction elsewhere.[1] Here, again, nature would plead for the courage and discretion of the Christian father in the adoption of rules of his own, on a subject of such deep interest; and, however he might be jeered, or even persecuted, for such scrupulosity, he would still command the internal approval of all who were honest, and had families of their own. "Caius Sejus is a good man, but he is a Christian,"[2] would be the measured terms in which such a one would be denounced by his Gentile neighbour, who would be led, in spite of himself, to doubt whether the fountain could be so bitter which sent forth waters so sweet.

The practice of making a conscience of his way, which thus caused the Christian to be true as a parent to the best interests of his child, of course affected him in a similar manner in all other relations of life, and with similar results; for it was not simply in these cases the Christian pleading with the heathen, but the man with the man; it was the higher principles of our nature, with which the Gospel sympathised, appealing to the higher principles of our nature, with which idolatry jarred. The heathen *husband*, provoked by the conversion of his wife, might maltreat her for a time, nay, might even resent (as he is said to have done) her improved morality and more scrupulous life, and, having tolerated her licentiousness in past times, might now be ready in his wrath to repudiate her virtue. But such waywardness could not long stand against patient continuance in well-doing on the part of his meek victim. She could not persist in displaying the domestic graces which Christianity taught her, without winning, sooner or later, golden opinions for herself and her creed; and if she became a stayer at home, if she clothed her household with the labours of her own hands, if she shed over it cheerfulness and con-

[1] Minucius Felix, § 22.

[2] Tertullian, Apol. § 3.

tent, if she quietly raised the thoughts of all about her to God,[1] she would charm them into a reverence for herself, and for the doctrine which had made her what she was, and procure for it, at any rate, a hearing. The heathen *master*, lenient towards the delinquencies of his heathen slave, might be found for a time, as we are told was often the case, to change his conduct towards him altogether on his embracing the Christian faith, and, when now his services were far better and more trustworthy than before, denounce and thrust him out;[2] but it would be impossible that even self-convenience and self-interest should not, in the long run, rectify this spiteful and irrational treatment of the humble dependant. It could not be but that, after a while, when the Christian servant was perceived to be more true and faithful than the heathen, he would be preferred to him, or that the inversion of right and wrong we have been describing could be lasting in its operation. The day would necessarily come, as it did come eventually, when the moral constitution of our being would vindicate itself, and give the better the advantage over the worse.

Nor would the humanity of the Christians to their *indigent brethren* be lost upon calm lookers-on, be their prejudices against them what they might. A common fund, raised and maintained by voluntary contributions of persons for the most part far from affluent, for the benefit of the sick, the stranger, the aged, the widow; large sums sent by them to distant and barbarous regions, for the purpose of rescuing Christian captives from horrors and insults worse than death;[3] relief conveyed by adventurous almoners to the martyrs and confessors in prison; outcasts nourished and brought up in some honest calling, instead of abandoned to a reckless world; artisans and

[1] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. iii. c. 11, p. 293.

[2] Tertullian, Apol. § 3.

[3] Cyprian, Ep. lx.

mechanics, too poor to renounce a trade which they nevertheless could not follow with a good conscience, set at ease by a judicious provision for their present necessities. All these were tokens of compassion and tenderness characteristic of the Christian which must have told in his favour whenever they came to light, as they would do, more or less, in a series of years, and have spoken for his principles with a power difficult to resist. More especially as there was no tincture of the fanatic in his charities any more than in his devotions. For nothing can be more wary or circumspect than the manner in which he guarded against abuses in the dispensation of this fund; the care he took that it should not be perverted to the purpose of swelling numbers, purchasing recruits, and encouraging impostors. He was aware of the danger, and expresses himself to that effect. If a Christian was to be released from the pain of an occupation which was profane or idolatrous, it was to be done with the strictest regard to economy, with no other object than to enable him to sustain life till he could find other employment.[1] If parties who had stood fast in the faith, and given proof of their constancy, were in danger of falling away through the temptation of absolute want—their conversion, probably, having reduced them to the strait—they were to be rescued from that necessity, but that was all.[2] If a widow, not satisfied with the pittance which the Church was in a condition to afford her, sought to improve her means by mendicancy, she was to be rebuked and restrained.[3]

Nor were the constancy and fortitude of the Christian less remarkable than his benevolence. His bravery under calamity whether acute or protracted, for he had to sustain both kinds of probation, could not be witnessed

[1] Cyprian, Ep. lxi.
[2] Ibid. v.
[3] Apostol. Constit. iii. c. 7.

without the thought very forcibly suggesting itself to any reflecting mind, that there must be some noble motives within him which supported him with such dignity under such trials; that the course he pursued, singular as it seemed, must have some strong propelling impulse to promote it; that this life could not be so little regarded, the loss of it so little dreaded, without some overwhelming assurance that there was another and a better in reserve; that it could not be without a reason he bestowed such honours on the dead body, and yet was so unconcerned about the living; that it was not of mere caprice he accumulated the incense and odours for its preservation, almost rivalling in amount those consumed in the temples of the gods; or that, though not altogether withdrawing himself from the heathen in his house and home, he would not share with him in his sepulchre.[1] Was it, then, mere matter for mockery that there would be a resurrection of the flesh?

"Mysterious people!" might the perplexed and pensive heathen say within himself, "Mysterious people! moving amongst us, and yet not seeming to be of us; passing through the world without seeming to be deeply concerned in its forms or fashions, its prizes or blanks; tranquil amidst its contentions, humble amidst its pomp, silent amidst its uproar, passive amidst its struggles, free amidst its bondage; wrapt up, it should appear, in thoughts of your own, which work in you pursuits of your own; happy in yourselves, and never so happy as when shedding quiet blessings on all around you! How have your ways won on me, durst I but say so! How has your simple character told its tale on me, more touchingly than all the arguments of philosophy, more convincingly than all the logic of the schools! How have you almost persuaded me to be a Christian!"

[1] Cyprian, Ep. lxviii.

CHAPTER VII.

The Obstacles to the Progress of the Gospel.—Hostility of the Jews.—Their Hatred of the Christians to be seen in the early Literature of the Church.—Justin Martyr.—Tertullian.—Cyprian.—Origen.—Arguments against the Jews from the Old Testament, and from the Cessation of the Ordinances of the Law by the Destruction of Jerusalem.

HAVING now described the principal secondary agencies, direct and indirect, by which the cause of the Gospel was expedited and the Church established, it seems time to review the obstacles which had to be overcome, and the several quarters from which opposition to its progress proceeded.

First of all, there was the hostility of the Jews. It is clear that an expectation prevailed amongst them, that the Messiah was to appear about the time of our Saviour's birth. The phrase, so common in the mouth of the people at the time, by which the Messiah was designated, "He that should come"—the waiting of Simeon for the consolation of Israel—the inquiries of Herod—the readiness with which the expounders of the Law replied to them—the excitement which attended the preaching of the Baptist—the alacrity with which the populace rushed into the wilderness to follow him—the facility with which even adventurers, "boasting themselves to be somebody," could collect a crowd about them—the favour with which Jesus was in the first instance received by the multitude—the curious inquiries which

were put to Him, calculated to test his character and claims—the bodies of foreign Jews of all nations collected at Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost, led there probably in such numbers, and from parts of the world so distant and various, by the general idea which prevailed that the weeks of Daniel were drawing to a close, and the Messiah on the eve of declaring Himself,—all these incidents mark how prepared the Jews were for the Advent; how ready to fall into the Messiah's ranks. But they were under a delusion respecting Him. Misconstruing the Prophets, they believed Him destined to be a conqueror, and to raise their nation, like the warrior leaders of old in the times of the Judges, from the degraded condition to which it had sunk, and deliver them from their oppressors—Philistines of another age and another nation. But they had no notion that his nature was to be divine; on the contrary, the thought, when it was presented to them, only startled, shocked, revolted them: and one of the strongest Anti-Socinian arguments we can advance is the fact, that the horror of the multitude at the announcement is recorded to have been such as it was, for it proves, beyond dispute, that the claim itself was clearly asserted at the time; that our blessed Lord professed Himself to be God, and called on the people to accept Him as nothing less. Thus on one occasion we read of five thousand men, who, having witnessed his miracles, actually acknowledged Him "as that Prophet that should come into the world," and even wished to take Him by force and make Him a king; yet the very next day these very same persons murmuring at Him because He had spoken of Himself as "the bread which came down from heaven;" and when He further proceeded to say, "Doth this offend you? what and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where

He was before?"[1] many of them actually refusing to walk with Him any more. Nay, at other times, when his words conveyed to them this great mystery, they even "sought to kill Him" for blasphemy, "taking up stones to stone Him."[2] And it was by making this the prominent charge against Him at the last, the Chief Priests were able to neutralise the popularity of One who had so shortly before ridden into Jerusalem amidst the jubilant acclamations of the whole multitude, and induced them to ask for the life of Barabbas rather than his.

The miracles which Jesus wrought, and the conclusion which seemed necessarily to follow from them, that whatever were his claims, the visible hand of God supported them, seem to have staggered many, and accordingly thousands were added to the Church; but still there was an immense party—the bulk of the nation—usually designated in the Acts as "the unbelieving Jews," who cherished the objection I have stated, and other objections I shall have to state; and who broke out from time to time in fierce attacks upon the Christian teachers, beginning with St. Stephen, repeating the murderous violence in the case of St. James, and persecuting in various cities both St. Paul and his companions, though not absolutely to the death. But it was not, as I have already suggested, the assertion of our Lord's divinity, and the blasphemy it was considered to involve, that was the sole cause of this excitement and animosity against his disciples. Besides being teachers of doctrine, they were men "who were turning all things upside down;" enemies, so reputed, of Moses and the Law, and consequently likely to set every man's hand against them, who either followed the literal interpretation of that Law, or

[1] John vi. 61, 62. [2] John v. 18; viii. 59.

who held offices in connection with it, or, in fact, who was attached to the ancient theocratic constitution of the country. An ill-informed conscience; an interested regard for personal advantages; a natural pride, which refused to share with Gentiles the privileges of a chosen race; an ignorance of the spiritual and ulterior sense of the Old Testament,—all these motives, in their turn, acted upon the several classes they touched. The suspicious and angry elements of the Jewish character, thus early put in motion, however corrected and restrained by the various influences of the Gospel calculated to counteract them for a while, continued to gather strength as time rolled on, till that word of Paul and Barnabas addressed to one company of Jews, "Seeing ye put the Word of God from you, and count yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles," became of more extensive signification; the Church gradually losing hold of the Jew and grasping the heathen, till at length its material became almost altogether changed from that of its first original, and the remnant of Israel, circumscribed at best, that accepted Christianity, dwindled away. During this process, the Jew was constantly waging war with the Christian in a variety of ways, disputing with him in argument, contending against him in policy, and persecuting him, where he could, to the last extremity, with an almost personal rancour. A whole department of the patristical literature of the first three centuries bears testimony to the continued resistance of the Jew to the dispersion of the Gospel, and to the hate he bore its heralds. The history of the Martyrdom of Polycarp tells us, that when the cry was raised in the amphitheatre for Polycarp to be burnt alive, "the preparations were made almost sooner than they could be described, the populace instantly betaking themselves to collect faggots from the manufactories and baths; the Jews, as

their custom is on such occasions, working with the greatest eagerness of any."[1] The Epistle of Barnabas, whether written by the Apostle whose name it bears or not, at all events a document, as I have said already, of the most primitive antiquity, probably of the first century, exclusively addresses itself to Jews, and is meant to meet their objections to the Gospel by giving them a deeper insight into their Law than they had been accustomed to exercise, extracting the spirit out of the letter, and the institutions of the New Testament out of those of the Old rightly understood and largely interpreted. Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, a writing of the second century, the longest and most elaborate of that author's works, is entirely devoted to the same object—the rebuking, the confounding, the converting of the Jews. From the treatise it appears that the Jews held the Christians in the utmost contempt; that they preferred the heathen literature to theirs;[2] that they instructed their teachers, though in vain, to maintain no intercourse with them;[3] that they sent emissaries over the world to spread evil reports of the Christians, to denounce their heresy as an imposture, and the disciples as deceivers, who, having stolen the body of Jesus after his crucifixion, gave out that He was risen;[4] that the Christians were saved from suffering the most extreme violence at their hands simply through the protection of the civil power;[5] that to whatever extent the Jews could venture to molest them, short of bringing upon themselves the wrath of the magistrate, they did;[6] that they affirmed, for the Messiah to have been subjected to death on the Cross—the malefactor's death, the death of the accursed

[1] Martyr. Polycarp. § 13.
[2] Justin Mart. Dialog. § 8. See also his 1 Apol. § 31.
[3] Ibid. § 38.
[4] Justin Mart. Dialog. § 17. 108.
[5] Ibid. § 113.
[6] Ibid. § 16.

—was a thing incredible;[1] nay more, that to represent Him as the same who talked with Moses and Aaron in the Pillar of Cloud, but then became a man, underwent this ignominious punishment, ascended up on high to come again to earth, and to set Him up as an object of worship, is simple blasphemy;[2] that they did not scruple to maltreat Scripture itself in their arguments against the Christians: disputing the correctness of the text where it supplied a conclusion they disliked; applying to a secular prince passages clearly relating to the Saviour; denying that these passages, which they admitted had a reference to the Saviour, had any reference to Jesus;[3] mutilating the Septuagint translation in places where its testimony was inconvenient to them;[4] and prepared to deal in the same manner with many other portions of Scripture, which they had spared merely because they were not aware of the latent meaning to the same effect which they contained.[5]

Tertullian, some fifty years later than Justin, or towards the latter end of the second century or beginning of the third, gives token of the same persevering hostility of the Jews to the cause of Christianity, by composing a Treatise expressly against them: a Treatise in which the weapons of their warfare are represented as we have seen them already represented by Justin—translations warped, spiritual prophecies construed by secular incidents, and the scandal of the Cross magnified as before.[6]

About the beginning of the third century, Hippolytus put forth "A Demonstrative Address to the Jews:" from the spirit of the fragment of it which remains (for it is no more), it would seem to have been a hortative Essay,

[1] Justin Mart. Dialog. § 89.
[2] Ibid. §. 38.
[3] Ibid. § 68.
[4] Ibid. § 71, 72, 73. 43.
[5] Justin Mart. Dialog. § 120.
[6] Tertullian, Adversus Judæos, § 7. 10.

rather than one of complaint. However, it bespeaks, at all events, the obstacle constantly presented to the Christians by the number and obstinacy of the Jews.[1]

Towards the middle of the third century, Cyprian feels called upon to discharge the same duty of resisting the Jews, and a work of his, in three books, remains, devoted to this object; which he is content, however, to pursue, by producing an array of texts with short comments on them; not so much repeating the charges against the Jew already produced, as showing that the Law had passed away, the Gospel taken its place. Meanwhile, the complexion of the Treatise seeming to indicate that the believers in Christ among the Jews were becoming fewer in number, the Gentiles superseding them. So much at least, I should infer from the wording of the Preface, in which he speaks of his first book as destined to show, that "the Jews, as was foretold of them, had lost the favour of God, and the Christians, by faith, being gathered from all nations, had succeeded to their position."[2]

Origen, who also lived in the third century, in his turn bears witness to the activity of the Jews against the Gospel, though not in any Treatise expressly levelled at them. But by his book against Celsus, whose "*Word of Truth*" was the earliest regular infidel attack against Christianity that appeared, we find that Celsus had cast a good deal of his argument in the form of a discourse of a Jew, first against Jesus Himself,[3] and then against the believers in Jesus,[4] as though in the mind of Celsus, who flourished under Adrian,[5] or about a century before Ori-

[1] Fabricius, ii. p. 2, et seq.

[2] Cyprian, Testimoniorum Libri Tres adversus Judæos, p. 274.

[3] Origen, Contra Cels. Præf. § 6; and i. § 58. 66. 71. He introduces the Jew, i. § 28.

[4] Origen, Contra Cels. i. § 71; ii. § 1.

[5] Ibid. i. § 7.

gen, the scepticism of the age issued very much from that mint; for otherwise, it is not likely that he would have put so many of his objections into the mouth of a Jew, seeing that most or all of them might have just as well, or even better, been urged by any other person. Indeed, a great many of them are such as would recoil upon Moses and the older dispensation,[1] and point to the conclusion, that a very strong leaven of infidelity, even with respect to Moses and the Prophets, besides that with respect to the Gospel, must have been working amongst the Jews themselves; a leaven which had probably descended from the Sadducees, and the philosophical party in Israel, which consisted chiefly of Sadducees, and must have served to aggravate that distrust of the Gospel, the truth of which involved the truth of the prior Revelation. At the same time, as many of the objections advanced by Celsus in the person of the Jew, are replied to by Origen, as if he were himself dealing with a Jewish antagonist, and as though he would be content if his arguments should meet the case of the Jew, it would seem that still, in his day, the Jews constituted a very important section of the assailants of Christianity, and were by him thought worthy of specific attention. For, certainly, several of the difficulties started take a wider range than the answers to them satisfy, and Origen himself seems to be aware of it.[2] With respect to the objections themselves, they are too many, and some of them too scurrilous to be produced in detail; but as examples of them we may select the following. The Jew maintains that the birth of Jesus of a Virgin was a fiction, in spite of the prophecy of Isaiah, in whom he believes.[3] That the arts by which Jesus exalted Himself were learned by Him whilst

[1] Origen, Contra Cels. ii. § 52, 53, 54.

[2] Ibid. ii. § 1. Καὶ αὐτό γε τοῦτο πρῶτον ἐφίσταμεν, κ. τ. λ.

[3] Origen, Contra Cels. i. § 28, 29.

He was sojourning in Egypt; and yet that Moses, who spent his youth in the same country, and in the same studies, wrought his miracles by the power of God.[1] That the descent of the Holy Ghost as a dove, at the Baptism of Jesus, is not to be believed, however passages abound in Ezekiel and in Isaiah, which speak of the heavens opening, and visions of God vouchsafed.[2] That God the Father did not help Jesus in his Passion, as might have been expected, nor yet did Jesus help Himself; though the Jew must have known that the Passion itself, and the necessity for it, was so fixed in the councils of God, as to have been the subjects of prophecy.[3] That his attendants were publicans, sailors, and men of that class, as though, if they had been learned and wise, their success in making converts would not have been natural enough.[4] That it did not become Jesus, if He were God, to fly to Egypt to save his life, seeing that God is not capable of dying, as though He did not unite in his own person Man with God, even according to prophecy, and had not subjected Himself in the former relation to all the incidents of manhood.[5] Where we may observe by the way, and the observation would apply to a great many of the objections accumulated by Celsus, that the Godhead of Jesus is distinctly assumed as a doctrine of the Christians, and that all the difficulties which are the consequence of that doctrine, are considered legitimate objections to the Gospel, and such as required solution at the hands of its defenders; a conclusion which they admit, and deal with it accordingly. That the miracles of Jesus are true indeed, as facts, but are simply the effects of magical skill,[6] as though the object of magicians was to improve

[1] Origen, Contra Cels. i. § 28. 45.
[2] Ibid. i. § 39. 43.
[3] Ibid. i. § 54.
[4] Origen, Contra Cels. i. § 62.
[5] Ibid. i. § 66.
[6] Ibid. i. § 68.

the morals of the world—which was the object of the miracles of Jesus, and to give glory to God. That to follow Jesus was to forsake the Law of their fathers; whereas, it was rather to do that Law honour, and render it significant, those being more truly said to abandon it who resolved it into allegories.[1] That if the Passion was his own act and deed, there was no room for the exclamation of Jesus, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" whereas, though He certainly uttered this, He added (what the Jew suppresses), "nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt;" the ejaculation expressive of the human nature of the sufferer, the qualification of the divine; and, whereas, the Jew would have had no opportunity for making this remark but for the candour of the Evangelist in recording the subject of it.[2] That the Prophets foretold in the Messiah a universal Monarch, not a person of mean condition, such as Jesus, though a Jew should have known that two advents of the Messiah are clearly predicted by them—the one in humility, the other in glory.[3] That Jesus, in his impatience of pain, when on the cross, accepted with eagerness the vinegar and the gall, whereas persons of no distinction had sustained the same suffering without any such relief; he aware all the while that this was an incident predicted in prophecy, and that so, instead of damaging, it confirmed his Messiahship,[4]—with much more to the same effect.

The manner in which the early Christians dealt with their Jewish antagonists, will have been now in some degree perceived by the character of the remarks attached to the Jewish objections which I have briefly inserted, and which are, in fact, their own. But in general it may be observed, that they do not rest their cause upon the evidence of miracles, so principally as at first sight might

[1] Origen, Contra Cels. ii. § 3.
[2] Ibid. ii. § 24, 25.
[3] Origen, Contra Cels. ii. § 29.
[4] Ibid. ii. § 37.

have been expected. Not that the appeal to such evidence is suppressed; on the contrary, it is advanced, but with less detail, and less apparent confidence in its success, than another species of argument to which I shall presently advert. In the long Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, the passages in which the evidence from miracles is touched, would amount to the merest fraction of the whole treatise;[1] and the like may be said of Tertullian's Essay, which is of much the same nature as Justin's Dialogue.[2] For the truth is, as I have already hinted, such was the age and such the temper of the nation, that miracles did not produce their due effect. Magical arts were cultivated to such an extent and with so much skill, as to baffle the force of the testimony of miracles. At Ephesus, after the preaching of St. Paul, "many of those which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver:"[3] and yet in spite of this vast surrender, in this same town there seems to have been much of the same ware withheld, for at a later date, St. Paul writes to Timothy, he being still at Ephesus, "that evil men and seducers (γόητες, magicians) shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."[4] And, accordingly, this feature of the times is the key, perhaps, to the dreadful denunciation uttered by our Lord against those who imputed his own miracles to Beelzebub, the curse made to fall on them "because they said, He hath an evil spirit," thus actually attempting to strangle the Gospel in its cradle, by steeling the hearts of men against the strongest evidence of its truth which the case admitted of—"wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

[1] Justin Mart. Dial. § 30. 39. 76. 85. 87, 88.

[2] Adversus Judæos, § 9.

[3] Acts xix. 19.

[4] 2 Timothy iii. 13. See Dr. Burton's Bampton Lecture, iv.

The ground which the Christians chose rather to occupy under the circumstances, in their conflicts with the Jews, and certainly an impregnable one, was that of Prophecy. In general they took the Scriptures of the Old Testament for the basis of their argument, and by developing the meaning they contained when rightly interpreted, endeavoured to prove to the Jew that the very writings he accepted ought to work his conversion to the Gospel; that the Law is but the Gospel foretold, the Gospel but the Law fulfilled. The principle, no doubt, sound, and sanctioned by the example of the Apostles themselves—the Epistle to the Galatians and that to the Hebrews, more particularly, going upon it; but in the hands of the early Christians, it may be thought, pushed occasionally to an extreme, and points of contact discovered between the Old Testament and the New, which are ideal rather than real. At the same time, it is to be remembered that the Old Testament was the only common ground on which the two parties could meet, and, therefore, that it was natural for the Christians to make the very utmost of it; and again, that this peculiar style of interpretation was entirely consistent with the taste of the times, and the habits of reasoning which then prevailed: not to speak of another impulse no less active, which operated in the same direction, and on which I shall have to express myself more fully when we come to deal with the obstacles thrown in the way of Christianity by the Heretics—that which arose out of their theory, that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament were not the same, an argument refuted chiefly by an array of passages gathered from both, calculated to show the identity of the two.

Accordingly, there is scarcely a fact or feature of the Gospel, however minute, which the Old Testament, thus expounded, does not portray; and unquestionably, let us

qualify the principle of approximation how we will, it is impossible to rise from a perusal of these Christian authors without being struck with the significant character of the Law and the Prophets when in their hands; the wheels from within wheels which they draw forth when treating of them; and without having a multitude of coincidences between the two revelations presented to the mind for the first time, whether true or doubtful, at any rate extremely curious; well qualified to beget in us a reverence for texts so simple when taken separately, yet so strangely correspondent when taken in combination, and without having the suspicion awakened that in handling the Scriptures we are handling a book of the most complex and mysterious character; that it may have been a part of God's plan, when imparting these two schemes of revelation to the world, to fill them not only with certain and indisputable mutual relations, but with others probable or possible, with a view to stimulate the ingenious and inquisitive faculties of man to a more diligent search after the secret treasures they contain, and to generate in him a habit of regarding the Bible as filled with the deep things of God beyond ordinary imagination.

Accordingly, the early Christians urged against the unbelieving Jews, that the miraculous conception of the Saviour was to be expected from the famous message in Isaiah already alluded to, the reading of which, and the interpretation of the reading, could not be disputed, inasmuch as *παρθένος* and not *νεᾶνις*, was the translation of the term in question in the Septuagint version, made some hundreds of years before Christ was born;[1] inasmuch as there would have been no "sign" or "wonder" (which was promised) had *νεᾶνις* been the true rendering; and inasmuch as other texts point to the same conclusion, as

[1] Justin Mart. Dial. § 67. 84.

for instance, "who shall tell his generation?"[1] They urged that the announcement of his advent by a star was merely consistent with the declaration by Balaam, that a star should come out of Jacob.[2] That the design of Herod against Him was exactly in accordance with the second Psalm, which said, that "the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Christ." They urged that the very name, Jesus, was foreshown, when the people were warned "to beware of the angel" whom God would send before them to lead them into the Holy Land, because "his name was in him"—the name of Hoshea having been changed to Joshua, or Jesus, for this very purpose.[3] They urged that if Jesus "taught in the daytime in the temple," it had been declared by the prophet Hosea that the Messiah, when He came, would do so: "He (the Lord) found Him in Beth-el (the house of God), and there He spake with us;"[4]—that if He often resorted to the Mount of Olives, Zechariah had said beforehand that such would be the Messiah's habit: "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives."[5] They urged that the power which the New Testament assigns to Christ crucified in defeating sin and death, is only such as the Old Testament led us to expect; that the victory of Israel, and the rout of Amalek, was effected by Joshua, or Jesus, presiding over the hosts of Israel, whilst Moses meanwhile assumed the attitude of the cross—a posture which he did not relinquish till the going down of the sun.[6] That indeed the cross, stumbling-block as it was to the Jews, was prefigured in

[1] Justin Mart. Dial. 43. 68.

[2] Ibid. § 106.

[3] Exodus xxiii. 21, and Numbers xiii. 16; Justin Mart. Dial. § 75.

[4] Hosea xii. 4; Tertullian, Adv. Marcion. iv. § 39.

[5] Zechariah xiv. 4; Tertullian, Adv. Marcion. iv. § 39.

[6] Justin Mart. Dial. § 90.

their Scriptures in a countless number of shapes and ways: in the horns of the unicorns, of which we read in Deuteronomy;[1] in the serpent of brass erected on the pole or cross;[2] in the wood borne by Isaac up the same Mount Sion so many generations before; the very thorns in which the head of the ram was caught on that occasion forcibly shadowing out the crown which was to be put on the head of the Saviour;[3] earlier still, in the wood by which Adam fell, that being the material which was to work his recovery from the Fall, by Christ;[4] in the mark of the blood of the paschal lamb on the lintel or door-posts;[5] in the cruciform spit on which that lamb was roasted;[6] in the express and specific predictions of the 22nd Psalm. They urged, that to die on the cross was, no doubt to die the death of the accursed, but that this was exactly realising the representation of the Prophets, who spoke of the Messiah as destined to die for transgressors, and to take on Himself the curse which appertained to them;[7] that the very season at which the crucifixion occurred was timed beforehand, namely, at the "Lord's passover," that great festival of remission of sin;[8] that the preternatural darkness was to be anticipated, for that Jeremiah had said, "the heavens were afraid at Him,"[9] and Amos, "In that day I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day;[10] that Jesus, lying in the grave three days, was only what the type of Jonah had prepared the world for;[11] that his ascension had been foretold plainly

[1] Deut xxxiii. 17; Justin Mart. Dial. § 91.
[2] Justin Mart. Dial. § 91. 94.
[3] Tertullian, Adv. Judæos, iv. § 13.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Justin Mart. Dial. § 3.
[6] Ibid. § 40.
[7] Justin Mart. Dial. § 89.
[8] Tertullian, Adv. Marcion. iv. § 40.
[9] Jerem. ii. 12, LXX; Tertullian, Adv. Judæos, § 13.
[10] Amos viii. 9; Tertullian, Adv. Judæos, § 11.
[11] Justin Mart. Dial. § 107.

and perspicuously in the 24th Psalm and in the 46th, the attendant angels crying aloud, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in;" the guardians of those portals replying, "Who is the King of Glory?" and the answer returned, "It is the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."[1] They urged that the admission of the Gentiles into the Church of God, which came with the Gospel, was just what might have been presumed; for that it was according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, which proclaimed that "He should bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles,"[2] that "the Gentiles should see his righteousness, and all kings his glory,"[3] and according to its types, for that the twelve bells, which tinkled on the garments of the high-priest, were a symbol that the sound of the Apostles was to go forth into all lands.[4] They urged that the sacraments of the Christian Church were intelligibly set forth in the ordinances and precepts of the Jewish, properly read; that the fine flour appointed to be given to God at the cleansing of a leper was but a figure of the Eucharist;[5] that the same sacrament was contemplated when Malachi declares, "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts."[6] That baptism was the ulterior meaning of circumcision, more especially expressed by those knives of stone, or of the rock (according to the Septuagint),

[1] Justin Mart. Dial. § 36, 37.
[2] Isaiah xlii. 1.
[3] Ibid. lxii. 2.
[4] Justin Mart. Dial. § 42.
[5] Levit. xiv. 21; Justin Mart. Dial. § 41.
[6] Malachi i. 10, 11; Justin. Mart. Dial. § 117.

used by Joshua when ushering the people into the Holy Land, which rock was Christ, and further unveiled by the injunction that the act of circumcision was to take effect on the eighth day, the first of the new week, the token at once of our Lord's resurrection, and of the resurrection from sin and death which was to be the consequence of baptism;[1] and that, in general, when Isaiah talked of washing the unclean, it was not merely of ordinary purification by water that he spoke, but still of baptism, eventually to be established on the basis of these carnal ablutions.[2]

I have suppressed, it will be at once perceived, a multitude of the more obvious applications of the Old Testament to the events and circumstances of the Gospel, as advanced by the early Christians against the Jews—such as admit of no dispute—preferring to produce several of those which are rather characteristic of the method of reasoning of the day, and to which, probably, the temper and taste of the times gave a peculiar force.

But there was yet another argument adduced by the Christian writers against the Jews, not open to the Apostles themselves, or at least to those of the Apostles who did not survive the fall of Jerusalem; an argument which could not but have great weight with them; namely, that as the actual existence of the capital and of the temple was necessary to the discharge of many of the rites of the Law, these being now destroyed, and the whole hierarchical dynasty done away (agreeably, indeed, to prophecy), they had no longer the means of fulfilling the ordinances of their Law; circumstances had broken it up;[3] nay, many prophecies relating to Sion could not any longer be possibly accomplished;[4] and, therefore, it was for them to consider whether they *could*

[1] Justin Mart. Dial. § 138.
[2] Ibid. § 13, 14.
[3] Justin Mart. Dial. § 52.
[4] Tertullian, Adv. Judæos, § 13.

be in the right whilst they still cleaved to that Law, and rejected the Gospel, into which it had died away. And, on reflection, one cannot but suppose, what in fact seems to have proved the case, that the Jew, thus dislodged by the force of events from the revelation of Moses, and unwilling to accept the revelation of Christ, found himself soon without a Creed, and accordingly lapsed into a religion of his own, which has hardened his heart against all wholesome impressions beyond any other class of men.

It has been said that the early Fathers undertook a task to which they were unequal when they entered into debate with the Jews, ignorant themselves of the original language of the Old Testament: for the internal evidence of their works, and especially when they touch on etymology, shows that their acquaintance with Hebrew was little or none. Indeed Origen, who was the first amongst them, as far as we know, who had made any proficiency in this study, appears to have applied himself to it after a certain age—so Jerome informs us—and, as we may conjecture from an expression which he uses in his Epistle to Africanus, did not feel himself, at the date of that letter at least, master of it. For, in debating the question whether the History of Susanna is authentic or apocryphal (Origen leaning to the former opinion), and in replying to the objection that a play of words which occurs in the Greek text, and which could not exist in the Hebrew too, seems to indicate that the Greek was the language in which it was written, and not the Hebrew, Origen observes that, being at a loss himself, he had conferred with not a few Jews, inquiring of them how πρῖνος (the name of one of the trees mentioned in the story) was called in their language; and how πρίζειν (to saw asunder, the appropriate punishment to be assigned to the elder who had told the lie about that tree), those being the two words which furnish the pun; as

though, in a case of nicety of this kind, he was not sufficiently skilled in Hebrew to trust really to himself;[1] a condition not inconsistent, perhaps, with the production of his Hexapla, a work of the patient, rather than the critical scholar. But, however this may be, the absence of a knowledge of Hebrew would not be so fatal as it might seem to a successful controversy with a Jew. The Septuagint was, undoubtedly, the Bible with which the Jews were, in general, familiar. The foreign Jews studied the Scriptures in that version, perhaps exclusively; and those of Judæa with but few exceptions, for even there the Hebrew Bible was explained by Syriac Targums.[2] When Jesus "stood up for to read," and the Book of the Prophet Isaiah was given Him, it was the Septuagint translation. In St. Stephen's speech before the Jewish Council, there are not less than twenty-eight distinct quotations from that version.[3] In the Epistle of St. James to the Twelve Tribes scattered abroad, there is not a single quotation which is not taken from the Septuagint. The Epistle to the Hebrews has been said, as far as language goes, to be a kind of mosaic, composed of bits and fragments of the Septuagint.[4] The Fathers, therefore, in using the Septuagint as the weapon of their warfare, used the same which the Apostles did, and one the legitimacy of which was acknowledged by the party they were contending against. Moreover, as this translation was made some two hundred and fifty years before Christ was born, it was impossible to object that those texts which bore testimony to Jesus could have been unduly treated by the Christians, and a meaning assigned to them which they were never intended to bear. Indeed,

[1] Origen, Ep. ad Africanum, § 6.

[2] Grinfield, Apol. for LXX, p. 30.

[3] Grinfield, Apol. for LXX, p. 32.

[4] Ibid. pp. 102, 103.

in this respect the translation, perhaps, had greater force even than the original; for it furnished an argument that the plain, unperverted sense of the Hebrew was what that version represented it; and that though the Hebrew, when strained for a purpose, might be made to speak somewhat less favourably for the Christian, still this could not be done with impunity so long as the Septuagint remained to rebuke the novelties of later translations, and stood as a monument of the sense assigned to Scripture by scholars necessarily impartial, and who lived when the original language was well understood. The attempts to wrest the Hebrew from the cause of the Gospel, made by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, in their translations, only served to show what a tower of strength the Septuagint was found to be; and the continual failure of the Churches in making converts of the Jewish nation must be imputed to other causes than a want of Hebrew acquirements in the Gospel teachers. Amongst these causes, it is evident that the obstacle I have already adverted to, the scandal of the Cross, was by far the most serious. It is the one to which Trypho is made to revert again and again. It is the one which tempts both Justin and the other early Fathers to press texts from the Prophets and types from the Law into their service, with a temerity that often defeats its end. The force of the Apostle's expression, "we preach Christ *crucified*, to the Jews a stumbling-block," can be very imperfectly estimated by those who have not read these early Christian documents. The imagination of the Jew, who had neglected to observe in Scripture the distinctions characteristic of the two advents, and had pictured to himself a Prince of Israel of unparalleled power and majesty in the coming Messiah, was naturally mortified to see Him hang on the cross as a thief and malefactor; and it was, perhaps, the actual mischief which this objection was

destined to work that caused Jesus to add a poignancy to his rebuke of St. Peter, who shared in it, above the common, and when, after the Lord had declared that "He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be killed;" and that Apostle had petulantly replied, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee;" Jesus turned on him and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me;"[1] for though it is not here expressly recorded that in the previous communication Jesus had told his disciples by what death He should die, yet we may conjecture that He had imparted to them the particular manner of it, from the wording of the reflection which follows, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up *his Cross*, and follow me." It is probable that the clamour with which the Jews denounced the *Crucifixion* of the Messiah as a scandal, was one cause why the Christians adopted the Cross on all occasions, and with the most persevering boldness, for their badge and symbol. So far from being ashamed of it, so far from qualifying the reproach of it, they hoisted it as the standard under which they fought, and by which they would conquer. They impressed it on their furniture, on their clothes, on their persons. In the Rubric of the administration of Baptism, according to the earliest forms, the priest signs the forehead of the catechumen with the sign of the Cross;[2] and I have sometimes thought that the "marks" or *στίγματα*,[3] which St. Paul describes himself as bearing in his body, have an allusion to this figure, which had been inscribed on him in that Sacrament. Certain it is, he had just before been speaking of *circumcision*, then of the *Cross*, in connection with it, and then of the *new creature*.

[1] Matthew xvi. 21, 22, 23.

[2] Goar, p. 334. Σφραγίζει αὐτοῦ τὸ μέτωπον.

[3] Galatians vi. 17.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the *Cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . For in Christ Jesus neither *circumcision* availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*. And as many as walk according to this rule (the rule of faith professed at Baptism, when they became new creatures), peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." And then he adds, "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the *marks of the Lord Jesus*." And a passage in the Excerpta of Theodotus, a work which professes to be a number of extracts from Clemens Alexandrinus, may be thought to give weight to this suggestion: "When the piece of money was presented to our Lord, He said, 'Whose is this image and superscription? Cæsar's'—in order that it might be given to him to whom it belonged. And in like manner the faithful believer has on him the mark of God through Christ; and the spirit, for the image; and irrational animals show by a certain mark to whom they belong; and are claimed by that mark. So the faithful soul having received the *Seal of the Truth*, bears about it *the marks of Christ*."[1]

[1] C. 86, ap. Clem. Alex. op. ii. p. 988.

CHAPTER VIII.

Hostility of the Gentiles to the Christians.—Excited against them by the exclusive Character of the Gospel.—The Social System of the World affected by it.—Prejudices against the Christians.—All Calamities imputed to them.—Nero's sanguinary Edicts.—Not repealed.—Effect of Private Malignity and the Ferocity of the Mob.—Tests of Christianity.—Evils of Persecution not unmixed.

WE are considering the principal obstacles which the Gospel had in the first instance to encounter, and the foremost of these which I have named is, the bitter hostility of the *Jews;* that of the *Gentiles*, to which I would now direct attention, is a second, no less formidable, for though the hatred of the Gentiles might be less intense than that of the Jews, the number of the enemy was greater, and its means of doing mischief more serious. The great powers of the world had not as yet found time to array themselves against Christianity. The force within it had not as yet expanded itself so as to excite uneasiness or alarm amongst the heathen authorities. It advanced for a considerable period unobserved, or at least unresisted. So far as they at least were concerned, its smooth course was not hindered. Even compunction with respect to it, a feeling in its favour, touched the leading agents of the crucifixion. Pilate, who had some misgivings during the trial of Jesus, and would willingly have released Him,—a Christian indeed at heart, according to Tertullian,[1]—became involved in troubles, not per-

[1] Apol. § 26.

haps exclusively political, and is said to have destroyed himself, possibly remembering, not without self-reproach, the caveat of his wife, "have thou nothing to do with the blood of that just man."[1] At any rate, his nation in general were hitherto, at the very least, indifferent to the progress of the Gospel. Up to the time of Nero, no movement from high quarters is recorded against it. Tiberius, indeed, is even reported to have made a proposal to the Senate, that Christ should be admitted amongst the gods of their country; such was the impression made on him by the mysterious communications he had received from Pilate, his officer in Judæa.[2] And though the proposal was rejected—rather, however, on a point of form than on its own merits—the Emperor retained his own opinion, and still had a favour for the Christians.[3]

The centurions of the Roman armies, who would probably reflect the feeling of the middle classes, wherever they are mentioned in the Gospels and Acts in relation to the Christians, are represented as well disposed towards them. Cornelius, a centurion, was the first Gentile convert. It was a centurion who besought Jesus to heal his servant, acknowledging Him as one who had the same authority over the evil spirits which he himself possessed over the soldiers of his company.[4] It was a centurion who, when he saw what came to pass at the crucifixion, glorified God, saying of Jesus, "Certainly this was a righteous man."[5] It was to a centurion that St. Paul had recourse when he sought aid against the Jews, who had secretly banded themselves together against him.[6] The centurion Julius courteously entreated St. Paul on his voyage to Rome, and when the soldiers would have killed the prisoners, the same man interposed, "willing to save

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. ii. c. 7.
[2] Ibid. ii. c. 2.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Matthew viii. 5.
[5] Luke xxiii. 47.
[6] Acts xxiii. 17.

Paul."[1] Gallio, the Roman deputy of Achaia, did not go so far as these in showing kindness to the Christians—the upper class of Romans, probably, at that time, not actuated by the same sympathies towards the Christians as those of a lower rank, who had not as yet discovered that it was destined for a time to work great troubles amongst them; but he would not join in any persecution of them. On the contrary, when the Jews would have persuaded him to take part with them against St. Paul, he refused, and "drave them from the judgment seat."[2] The incident of St. Stephen's death, and the circumstances attending it, offer no contradiction to the view of the temper of the Roman Government. That whole proceeding—the animosity and the guilt of it—rested with the Jews altogether. The Romans, no doubt, had the supreme authority at Jerusalem, and that authority they did not exert for the protection of the martyr; but that was according to their custom. Mr. Biscoe, indeed, in his History of the Acts of the Apostles,[3] has an elaborate argument to show that the Jews were never deprived of the power of inflicting capital punishment according to their own law; and he even advances the case of St. Stephen, amongst other matters, in support of his assertion, considering his martyrdom, not a tumultuous act of violence, but the dispatch of a judicial sentence by the executioner: the stoning of the prisoner, and the hands of the witnesses first upon him—both of them regulations in accordance with the Mosaic Law—intimating as much. On the other side, it is objected, how, then, are we to account for the declaration made by the Jews on the occasion of our Lord's crucifixion, that "it was not lawful for them to put any man to death?" Would it not rather appear from this, it is said, that the scene of St. Stephen's

[1] Acts xxvii. 43.
[2] Ibid. xviii. 14, 15, 16.
[3] Biscoe on the Acts, p. 151.

murder exhibited an explosion of popular violence, wholly regardless of the law; and ought to have been, and would have been, suppressed by the Roman magistrate, had he felt for the sufferer?

An incidental remark of Origen, whilst it substantially supports the opinion of Mr. Biscoe, reconciles to it the objection of his opponents. When discussing the History of Susanna, Origen, in reply to an argument against the truth of that history, that it is hard to understand how persons who were living in a state of captivity, as were Daniel and his fellows, could pronounce sentence of death, as they did, on the offending elders, observes, that it is no unusual thing for victorious princes to grant to a conquered people the enjoyment of their own tribunals; and he then adds, "even now, though the Jews are under tribute to the Romans, their Ethnarch, by the permission of Cæsar, is allowed to have considerable power among them; insomuch that their trials are conducted according to their own laws, though clandestinely; and even capital punishment inflicted; not, it is true, as an absolute right, but under the imperial connivance."[1] Thus it would seem that St. Stephen suffered capital punishment at the hands of the Jews, even in spite of its not being exactly lawful for them to put any man to death—the majesty of the Roman law contented to lie in abeyance, though ready, at any time, on any abuse of the privilege conceded, to assert itself, and resume its functions.

No conclusion, therefore, against the perfect toleration of the Christians hitherto exercised by the Roman Magistrates, is to be drawn from the case of St. Stephen. Had it fallen under their own immediate cognizance, there is every reason to believe that his life would have been safe.

Wherever the Apostles directed their steps, they found

[1] Origen, Ep. ad Africanum, § 14.

the heathen, if left to themselves, as yet rather disposed to welcome than reject them. St. Paul and St. Barnabas came to Antioch in Pisidia, and there taught; and, whilst the Jews exhibited great jealousy of them, the Gentiles begged to hear the same words the next Sabbath.[1] At Lystra, they were even ready to do sacrifice to them, calling Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius.[2] At Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, the Roman Governor, actually called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God; and not only so, but became a convert.[3] At Melita, Publius, the chief man of the island—as he is designated in our translation, but whom this title technically bespoke to be the representative of Rome, received Paul and the party with him, and lodged them courteously three days. And the impression on the mind of the Apostles seems even to have been, that in case the Jews refused to hear them, they might turn to the Gentiles with every prospect of being well treated, however it might be expedient to deal gently with their own nation for a while. And, indeed, many of the most distinguished labourers in the cause of the Gospel, during its very earliest progress, were Gentiles, or of Gentile blood. Timothy, eventually Bishop of Ephesus, was the son of a *Greek*, a heathen as it should seem, for St. Paul thought it necessary to disarm the suspicions of the Jews, who knew his parentage, by submitting him to the right of circumcision, which had therefore been neglected in his infancy. Titus, who attained to the primacy in Crete, was in the same position; he, too, a Greek, and under the same reproach with the Jews.[4] Moreover, the course of the narrative in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, where Titus is introduced, would appear to narrow any ambiguity in this instance which might attach

[1] Acts xiii. 42.
[2] Ibid. xiv. 12
[3] Acts xiii. 7. 12.
[4] Gal. ii. 3.

to the term *Greek;* St. Paul, whilst giving his reasons for refusing to deal with Titus as he had done with Timothy, naming himself the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, and relating how he had reproved St. Peter for compelling the *Gentiles* to live as did the Jews. Dionysius the Areopagite, afterwards Bishop of Athens, was probably a heathen by birth.[1] The same may be said of Fortunatus, mentioned in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians; probably the messenger of Clemens to the Church of Corinth.[2] The same of Stephanas, who, with his household, were the first-fruits of Achaia; a family whom St. Paul baptized with his own hands, conferring on them that distinction as the pioneers of the Gentile Church about to establish itself in that quarter.[3] And, indeed, in general, the character of the names which figure in the salutations sent by the Apostle in several of his Epistles to the Churches at a distance, bespeaks the parties to be Gentiles by birth and connection; especially where those names involve the titles of the heathen gods, for such the Jews would not be likely to assume. Thus, Artemas involves Diana; Hermes, Mercury; Demas, Ceres; Diotrephes and Zenas, Jupiter; Apollos, Apollo; Dionysius, Bacchus.[4] The prominence thus given to them, and often the very terms in which they are spoken of, imply no less the effective manner in which these heathen converts co-operated with the Apostles in forwarding the interests of the Gospel.

It is true the Jews could, on occasion, exert the local influence they possessed amongst their heathen neighbours, to stir them up against the Apostles, of whose position as strangers they took advantage. So it came to pass at Iconium, and again at Lystra,[5] but the Gentiles

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 4.
[2] 1 Cor. xvi. 17; Ep. Clem. § 59.
[3] 1 Cor. xvi. 15.
[4] Evans' Biography, ii. p. 203
[5] Acts xiv. 2. 19.

required this provocation before they would act against the brethren; it was no spontaneous movement on their part, but rather the contrary.

In two instances, and in two instances only, as recorded in the Acts, the impulse originated with the heathen themselves. The first at Philippi, where the damsel possessed of a spirit of divination had been exorcised by St. Paul, and, accordingly, her masters, deprived of the gain they were making of her, raised the multitude, and even prevailed on the Roman magistrates to take part with them;[1] but this was under the pretext of their being Jews—a race offensive to the Romans—who were daring to trouble the city, and that city a Roman colony, the question of Christianity having nothing to do with the tumult.

The other instance was at Ephesus, where, at the instigation of Demetrius and the craftsmen, who thought that the Apostle's preaching was calculated to bring the goddess Diana into contempt, and damage the sale of the silver shrines which they manufactured, the place was moved against the Apostle;[2] but this, again, was a case of gain. Both these incidents serve to show the quarter from which a storm was destined eventually to come, and which I have already described in a former part of this History, when treating of the obstacles through which the Gospel had to win its way. They were the drops before the cloud broke. But time was wanted to display the effects of Christianity, on a great scale, which here discover themselves in little. The heathen world did not argue at once from the blow supposed to be dealt at the shrine of Diana at Ephesus, by the Apostle, to the ruin which the Gospel he taught would inflict on all traders whatever in idolatrous articles; nor would it at once see in the single case of the dispossessed damsel the eventual

[1] Acts xvi. 20.

[2] Acts xix. 24, et seq.

subversion of the whole dynasty of the gods, and the abandonment and decay of the temples and priesthood. It was the work of years to realise these conclusions in the gross, so as to affect the social character of Christianity, and prescribe the treatment which should be dealt out to it by the heathen. From the first chapter of the Acts to the last, a memoir which would cover a period of thirty years after the Crucifixion, there is no symptom of any systematic opposition to the Christians, manifested by the heathen. The incident in St. Paul's life, with which that history closes, is, that though a prisoner at Rome, on charges brought against him by his countrymen, he was allowed to "dwell two whole years in his own hired house, and to receive all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." Nay, it was during this interval that he appears to have made an impression in the very highest quarter, his bonds serving to introduce some knowledge of the Gospel even into the Palace; and converts were made even in Cæsar's household.[1]

But a great change in these friendly feelings towards the Apostle, and towards the cause he was pleading, was now on the eve of discovering itself; and at his second visit, as we have already said, made after an interval of four years, the rigour of his imprisonment, for a prisoner he again was, seems to have been extreme, and death, at length, to have been the hand which set him free.

Henceforward the position of the Christians became altered: the law, which had hitherto befriended, was hereafter to oppress and grind them; not always in action, but always in a condition to act; and circumstances perpetually occurring, either at the instigation of a provincial magistrate, or of the mob, to awake its

[1] Philipp. i. 13; iv. 22.

terrors. But even here one may see the fostering hand of God extended over his infant Church. As the heathen, hitherto neutral, proceeded to arm themselves against the cross, the Jews, hitherto its enemies, waxed comparatively feeble. The date of Nero's sanguinary edicts preceded by some eight years the fall of Jerusalem; the force of the Jew abated, as that of the Gentile became formidable.

Meanwhile, every advantage had been taken of the preceding period, during which the lion slept. Never were thirty years more prolific in consequences than those which succeeded the day of the fiery tongues. During the whole of that interval, the leaven, hid as it was, was extending itself silently into all parts of the Roman Empire; so that when the authorities of that nation awoke to a consciousness of the progress and power of the principle, it was too late to arrest it.

That which irritated the heathen against the Gospel chiefly, was its exclusive character; it asserted, not merely that the God, whose revelation it was, was the true God, but that there was no other;—that the gods of the nations were no gods—were even devils; the worship of the stocks and stones which represented them, vain, and worse. Indeed there is no limit to the scorn and derision with which they ventured to pursue this fruitful topic of declamation.

When we consider what a combination this declaration of war against the gods would array against the Christians, we shall cease to wonder that the persecution of the Gospel became terrific. It was a question that touched the social system of the world to the very quick. That system was based upon the religion of the day, such as it was. It would fall to pieces without its aid. The higher orders might disparage it, disbelieve or doubt its truth amongst themselves, but they must have still had

their suspicions that the fear of Jupiter was not without its influence in protecting their property and lives; they must have seen that their gardens were safer for the presence of a tutelary god; that even the rights of decency were secured by the sacred memento; and that there was a good deal of risk in deposing these prescriptive objects of veneration. Accordingly, the early Christian apologists, in addressing the upper ranks (for to such their Apologies are directed), are above all things solicitous to clear themselves from a charge of atheism, a charge resting, it seems, upon very plausible grounds, for the Christians denounced all the old gods, and set up no visible image, at least, of any other, in their stead.

It was not, however, the superior class, by any means, that supplied the sole, or even the chief adversaries of the Christians. On the contrary, many of that class seem to have treated the Gospel with simple indifference; secular philosophy, or sheer incuriosity, blinding their eyes to its worth or even importance. Such, for instance, was Crescens, the persecutor of Justin Martyr, a Cynic, a slanderer of Christians, who had given himself no trouble, however, to ascertain the principles of those he was assailing.[1] Such was Autolycus, the friend to whom Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, addresses his work in explanation and defence of Christianity. He, it seems, was a great reader, but whilst he devoted himself with eagerness to heathen literature, he had to be coaxed and persuaded to hear what could be said in favour of the new revelation.[2] In the Dialogue of Minucius Felix, of which I have already spoken, Minucius represents himself as at first acquiescing in the salutation, which his companion, Cæcilius, offered the image of Serapis, without any remark or any attempt made by him to expose the folly of his idolatry, or to suggest a better faith; as though he

[1] Justin Mart. Apol. ii. § 3. | [2] Theoph. iii. § 1.

considered Cæcilius to belong to a rank for whom such subjects had little interest.[1] Accordingly another principal end, which the Apologies propose to themselves, is to awaken the attention of the more influential classes, philosophers or officers of state, to the nature and character of the Gospel, as though it required an effort to accomplish that object.[2] The very language used by the more humane magistrates (for some were humane) to dissuade the Christians from martyrdom, bespeaks the cool and supercilious spirit with which they regarded their cause. "Save your lives," they said, "throw not away your lives."[3] "Wretched men, if ye must needs die, have ye not precipices and halters that would suffice?"[4] Many of the higher orders, of times subsequent, may be considered to have adopted the words of Gallio—for, as I have already remarked, the main features of early ecclesiastical history present themselves primarily in the Acts of the Apostles—"If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters."[5] But however the upper ranks of heathens might despise, suspect, or even persecute Christianity, a host of fierce foes soon began to discover themselves in the ranks below them, almost all of whom found themselves suffering, in the first instance, by its introduction and progress.

It is interesting to trace the effects of Christianity as a disturbing force in the affairs of mankind, and it is by such investigation that we are best enabled to understand the amount of hostility it provoked. I have touched upon this topic in a previous chapter, though under a

[1] Octav. § 2, 3.

[2] See Justin, 1 Apol. § 3; Tertullian, Apol. § 1.

[3] Tertullian, Scorpiace, § 11.

[4] Ibid. Ad Scapulam, § 5.

[5] Acts xviii. 14, 15.

different aspect of the argument, but the subject is exhaustless, and there is a call for a further instalment of it here.

The Priesthood, in all its branches—Flamens, Augurs, Haruspices—must have all contemplated the advance of Christianity with irritation and dismay. It emptied their temples, curtailed their sacrifices, reduced their profits, exposed their frauds. And these persons, it is to be remembered, constituted a very important section of society; education alone (for educated they were with much care) gave them power; the natural influence of position and office—the Emperor himself at the head of their order—must have made itself felt on public opinion, and swayed it to their own purposes, which, in the present case, they must have thought honest ones. The Lawyers were likely to suffer by it, and to hunt it down. They were a body with whom the Christians found a difficulty in dealing. The contracts and legal acts, of which they were the channels, were embarrassed, as we have seen, with forms which wounded the conscience of the Christian, and the courts they practised in encompassed with idolatrous regulations which prevented the Christians from approaching them. The soldiers were offended by it: for though we certainly read of Christian soldiers—whether persons whose conversion to Christianity occurred after enrolment in the ranks, or whether persons, already Christians, who were not convinced by the arguments of many of their brethren that the calling was profane—and though even a Constitution of the Church allowed them to be received within its pale, provided they would promise to forbear from violence, from false accusation, and to be content with their wages;[1] yet the lawfulness of the profession of arms, under any circumstances, was questioned; "Put up thy sword into its sheath," being

[1] Constit. viii. § 32.

construed by many as a prohibition to bear it,[1] and the man who sold himself to the service of the camp regarded as one who was bartering his soul for money, and classed with the mercenaries of the arena.[2]—We may well imagine what a sensation would be produced in a nation, and especially in a military nation, like that of Rome for instance, by such a condemnation, or even suspicion, of the army; the parties, moreover, presuming to express it persons in general of no mark or consequence whatever.

The numerous hands engaged in tuition would owe it a grudge. Schoolmasters, we have seen, were regarded with distrust by the Christians; the lessons they taught denounced as vicious; and whatever influence the Christians might have with parents, exerted to prevent them from sending their children to such objectionable teachers. Again, Christians, even in the earlier stages of their profession, were warned against frequenting Taverns.[3] Nay, the keepers of those taverns were rejected by the Christians from their society, so long as they continued in that occupation.[4] No inconsiderable reinforcement to the strength of their adversaries would issue from a quarter like this—particularly when we bear in mind how confederate the members of the different trades appear to have been, in the Roman States at least, and the taste there was to form themselves into societies or clubs. Masters of fence and other Professors of that class —in number not a few—many of them specified in one of the Constitutions[5]—charioteers, gladiators, race-runners, boxers, players, pipers, harpers, dancers,—in short, all persons who gained their bread in the Amphitheatre, the

[1] Tertullian, De Coronâ, § 11.

[2] Ibid. De Patientiâ, § 7. The latter of these Treatises, at all events, written before Tertullian became a Montanist.

[3] Clemens Alexand. Pædag. iii. c. 11, p. 297.

[4] Apostol. Constit. viii. c. 32.

[5] Ibid.

Theatre, and the Circus,—men of low tastes and base associates—must have been made enemies of the Christians by the mark of ignominy they set upon their calling,[1] and were not the people to be very nice in their manner of expressing their enmity. It is hardly possible to overestimate the swarms of men and women—the artists, not to reckon the spectators—connected with these scenes, immediately or remotely; and whose convenience or subsistence would be at stake in the subversion or decay of these fascinating haunts. I say remotely, as well as immediately; for, not to speak of the hands engaged in rearing and repairing the structures themselves in which the sports were exhibited, and in providing the due apparatus for them; these places of public resort, of universal confluence, were also vast bazaars, affording admirable marts for all manner of merchandise;[2] were clubs on the largest scale, where politicians, and especially radical politicians, found a fit audience;[3] were temples of fashion, where female finery could be displayed to the greatest advantage.[4] But the Christians set their faces against them; abstained from frequenting them themselves, and held them up to execration and abhorrence. What a nest of hornets must they have stirred up for themselves in this quarter! Then those who were interested in the preservation of the *Temples* and the worship appertaining to them—whether mechanics, artists, or tradesmen—were even more numerous than the followers of the *Shows*. There were the Architects and Builders, for instance, who found employment in the erection of these structures. They were, beyond all comparison, the best field for the highest order of their profession; in fact, the more sumptuous of them gave it animation, and, if they did

[1] Tertullian, De Idolol. § 11.
[2] Ibid. Apol. § 42.
[3] Ibid. § 35; Ad Nationes, i. § 17; De Spectac. § 16.
[4] De Cultû Fœminarum, ii. § 11.

not call it into being, raised it to excellence. In Rome alone, even in St. Jerome's time, there were still standing more than two hundred;[1] whilst those of more humble pretensions were scattered over the country in such profusion as to have served for the casual shelter of the wayfaring man and the shepherd. The Sculptors and Painters were no less busy within these sacred edifices, than were the others without. The most illustrious statuaries and designers of old spent their strength in giving a form to the gods who occupied them. It was the nature of the subject that kindled their genius, and imparted a power beyond its own to their chisel and brush. What must have been their feelings towards men who turned into derision the choicest work of their hands, who delighted to dwell upon the sawings, and filings, and lead, and glue, and nails, and all the base mechanical devices, by which they manufactured a god![2] Then the Crafts which supplied the furniture of the Temples would be up in arms at the blow dealt at them; the manufacturers of lamps, of tripods, of "silver shrines;" for the scene at Ephesus, when St. Paul is expelled by the artificers of those holy trinkets, is but a simple foretaste of the future; the history of the Acts, in this instance, again, faintly foreshadowing the influences that wrought upon the Church in greater force at a later period. It is impossible to witness, even now, the hands employed in some of the remote towns of Italy and Sicily, in the preparation of wares relating to the local Saint, without perceiving how many would be deprived of their bread were that Saint deposed. At Trepani, for example, the number of persons who find a living in cutting diminutive figures in coral of the Madonna of that place, must be considerable. For it is to be

[1] See Dr. Burton's Antiquities of Rome, p. 149.

[2] See Clemens Alexand. Cohortatio, § 4; Tertullian, Apol. § 12.

remembered further, that, besides those who were engaged in supplying the fine form for the presiding genius of the Temple, there were wanted workmen of an inferior grade to furnish Penates of all kinds for all dwellings, probably not a house being without a protector. Nor would one suffice, where almost every element of a house had a sacred character of its own, and was under the tutelage of some peculiar Divinity; a Door, a Threshold of a Door, a Hinge of a Door, and so on, having each its celestial Patron.[1] Protestant countries, at least, can have no idea of the minute ramifications of the ancient Pagan system, and of the extraordinary manner in which it injected itself into the minutest vessels of the frame of society; and it is only by pursuing this thought into some of its details, as I am now doing, that we can possess ourselves adequately of a sense of the prodigious obstacles the Gospel had to surmount before it could make any effectual lodgment amongst mankind, or appreciate the strength of the argument for its truth, supplied by a comparison of its modest means and its triumphant success. Look at the representation Clemens Alexandrinus incidentally draws of an Egyptian Temple, when, in reproving the women for their meretricious decorations, he compares them to it. "There are cloisters," says he, "and vestibules, and groves and glades; the courts are adorned with pillars of all sorts; the walls glitter with foreign stones; not one curious picture is lacking; the sanctuaries glisten with gold, silver, and amber; scintillate with various pebbles from India and Æthiopia. The shrines are shrouded with veils wrought in gold."[2] Would not vast multitudes of people naturally take alarm at the advance of a religion which seemed to strike at the root of all these embellishments? and must they not have contemplated its agents

[1] See Tertullian, De Idolol. § 15; Ad Nationes, ii. § 10. 15.

[2] Pædag. iii. c. 2.

with abhorrence, as men who were putting their craft in danger, and turning the world upside down? Nor was even this all. The amulets worn about the person, of minute and delicate workmanship,—and such, probably, were the tiny figures now found in such profusion in the museums of Italy,—must have been a branch of trade, as we say in these days, of no mean account, especially in countries not commercial; and even the preparation of votive tablets must have brought profit to the mechanic, more especially if the feeling which dictated them extended to the suspension in the temples of ears, eyes, and various members of the body, wrought in precious material or in material of any kind, in grateful recognition of diseases in those parts cured, or risks escaped, by the interposition of the Deity. This practice probably prevailed to a great extent; such a one, though for a different object, being recorded of the Egyptians by Clemens,[1] and the same now obtaining in the Churches of Italy, and looking very much like an inveterate tradition of ante-Christian times—so far, to be sure, the mechanic and artisan have certainly been left (as matters have turned out) in much the same position as before the Gospel was preached—the continuance, however, of this and of some other usages, could not have been contemplated on the first introduction of Christianity; nor did they probably prevail in the Church in its earliest and purest days. However, the serious hindrance to its progress which this almost universal interference with the market for labour presented, is perceptible in the plea wont to be set up by the Christian workman in extenuation of his offence when supplying furniture for idolatry; and in the solicitude which the Christian teacher manifested to meet his objections, and to suggest to him other channels in which his mechanical ingenuity might profitably spend

[1] Stromat. v. § 7.

itself. The workman, on his side, contended that St. Paul instructed every man to abide in the calling wherein he was called; that his own example tended to the same conclusion, for that he wrought with his own hands for a living; that the necessity of the case absolved him, and the extreme difficulty of earning a maintenance under the restrictions imposed by the rigid rule of the Christians.[1] The Christian teacher replied, that the Scriptural argument, as thus applied, would cover the cases of the gambler or thief; that, in fact, no man would have to be excluded from the Church on the ground of his occupation at least, be it lawful or otherwise; that there were other modes of gaining a livelihood by the same department of industry differently directed; that the mason, for instance, who could rear temples, could build houses, plaster walls, line cisterns, coat columns; that he who could draw a figure, could polish a slab; he who could carve a Mercury, could put together a chest of drawers; that there were few temples to be constructed, many houses; few Mercuries to be gilded, many slippers and sandals; and one of these preachers, with a touch of the spirit of Tacitus, bids his hearer be of good cheer, for that luxury and ostentation are, after all, worth far more to the artisan than any kind or all kinds of superstition.[2] I have handled this subject in somewhat disproportionate detail, because I think it exhibits, in a very remarkable manner, the ferment in society, amongst the million, amongst the industrious classes themselves, which the introduction of the Gospel caused, and the elements of opposition and persecution it must have set in action against itself, by stirring the very foundations of the working-day world. Nor is it a matter for wonder, however it may be for concern, if the religion of the Gospel was not altogether able to withstand the pressure of this

[1] Tertullian, De Idolol. § 5. | [2] Tertullian, De Idolol. § 8.

strong impulse from without; and felt in some degree the effect of inveterate habits which had ministered for such numbers of years to the pleasure, the profit, the convenience, even the necessities, of thousands and tens of thousands. For that the decent ceremonial of the Primitive Church (and a decent ceremonial it had) eventually became tainted by the uneradicated taste of Pagan times, is but too true.

These are but a few of the moving springs which excited and animated the heathen to the persecution of the Gospel and of its disciples; suffice it to have laid them bare, and thus to have put the mind of my readers in a train for exploring others for themselves. The fact itself, that such a spirit prevailed amongst the multitude at large, is indisputable, as we shall see more fully when we come to treat of the persecutions of the early Church. We read that the populace, quite regardless whether the law was with them or against them on this particular question, took it into their own hands, and assailed the Christians with blind violence.[1] Tertullian expressly tells us that "there were no greater persecutors of the Christians than the vulgar."[2] Nay, where there was a disposition in the authorities of the State to spare them, the mob were relentless, and would have their blood;[3] stoning, burning them, and, in impotent spite, tearing down their very sepulchres.[4] They denounced them as unprofitable citizens, reluctant to take their share in the duties of the State, to bear their part in its social relations, to reciprocate in its trading intercourse.[5] They ascribed to them the most diabolical proceedings at their secret meetings; infanticide, a cannibal feast, and, the lights extinguished, a sequel of promiscuous incest. Much of the

[1] Tertullian, Apol. § 37.
[2] Ibid. § 35.
[3] Ibid. Ad Scapulam, § 4.
[4] Tertullian, Ad Scapulam, § 3.
[5] Ibid. Apol. § 42.

Apologies is occupied in disposing of these revolting slanders; one foundation of which, however, it is easy to see in the misconstruction, wilful or ignorant, of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and of the Christian apophthegm, "Let us love one another." They imputed to the Christians all the calamities which befell the State, enemies as they were to the gods. If the Tiber overflowed its banks, and damaged the suburbs; if the Nile ran within its bed and refused to water the fields; if there was drought, an earthquake, famine, or plague, forthwith the cry was, "Away with the Christians to the lions."[1] So that when the great fire at Rome had to be accounted for, and its real author to be screened, nothing was more natural than to lay it to the charge of the Christians; nothing more in harmony with public opinion than to follow up the charge by lighting the streets with them at night, the by-standers, meanwhile, saluting them with the title of "Faggot-men," "men of the half-axle," the instruments of their death made to furnish the material for the joke.[2]

It is no wonder, therefore, that the persecution of the Christians was speedily legalized; the wonder would have been, if it had been otherwise. Nero, as became him, was the founder of the policy. He made it a capital offence to be a Christian.[3] And however the law might be subsequently modified, or allowed to sleep, such it continued substantially to be, capable of resuscitation at any moment. We are expressly assured, that some hundred and fifty years later, though every other edict of Nero had been repealed, that against the Christians remained in force. The evidence, indeed, of Pliny's fa-

[1] Tertullian, Apol. § 40.

[2] Sarmentitii, Semaxii, Apol. § 50.

[3] Tertullian, Apol. § 5. Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 45, which was addressed to the Antonines, speaks of the sanguinary laws as then in force.

mous letter to Trajan has been adduced in opposition to this conclusion, and the inference drawn from Pliny's difficulty in dealing with the case of Christians in the Provinces, and the instruction he requires on the subject from the Government at home, that there was no law in being at the time which touched the Christians, or none at least that was intelligible. But an attentive examination of the terms used in it would show, that Pliny's embarrassment arose, not from the absence or obscurity of the law, but from his own inexperience in the application of it. He had never been present at any trial of a Christian, a circumstance which presupposes the necessary machinery for it to be forthcoming; and he was staggered by the numbers and character of the accused. The law was, as I have said, very partially modified, and, from time to time, allowed to sleep. Trajan seems rather to have thrown obstacles in the way of its vindictive construction than to have changed it. He discouraged any inquisitorial search after the Christians, and forbad anonymous accusations. Hadrian strengthened this latter provision by rendering the author of a false imputation liable to punishment.[1] Vespasian, Antoninus, Verus,[2] Severus, Caracalla,[3] seem personally to have taken no offence at the Christians, nor to have desired their extermination; indeed Severus is said to have nourished a Christian in his own palace till his death, in gratitude for a cure he had received from him; and Caracalla to have had a Christian for his nurse.[4] Yet under all these Emperors persecution of the Christians prevailed; the details of which, indeed, will form a large portion of the future history of the early Church: for though they might have humanity enough to wish that the Christians should be left unmolested, they had not courage enough,

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 9.
[2] Tertullian, Apol. § 5.
[3] Tertullian, Ad Scapulam, § 4.
[4] Ibid.

or perhaps influence enough, to abrogate the law, which still continued to make the profession of Christianity a capital offence; and, accordingly, the Christians appear to have been ever exposed to local oppression, as the malignity of the governor of a province, or, what was perhaps more common, the ferocity of a mob, over whom the reins of a falling empire were losing their control, let itself loose against them. Eusebius expressly tells us that such was the case, even under Trajan, disposed, as we have seen he was, to mitigate, rather than sharpen, the severity of the law.[1] And the Apologies of the Christians constantly bear witness to these facts; addressed, as they sometimes are, not to the supreme authorities at Rome, but to magistrates in remote quarters, and in their substance betraying that the storm was raised rather by the people than by their nominal rulers.

The tests by which the Christians were detected were of the coarse and tyrannical kind which accorded with the character of their persecutors. Sausages stuffed with blood set before them to eat, it being known that from blood, as a food, they scrupulously abstained;[2] a chafing-dish brought in, and the suspected party required to cast upon it the idolatrous incense;[3] sacrifice to be performed openly, and with every aggravation of exposure and humiliation;[4] a procession to the Capitol, formed amidst a crowd rife for all manner of mischief;[5] possibly the ceremonial so arranged as that the refusal to take part in it should imply disloyalty to the Emperor as well as to the gods; the oblation to be made "for the safety of Cæsar."[6] Hence the pains the early Christians were at in order to remove from themselves the suspicion of doubtful allegiance. The texts to that effect of St. Paul and St.

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 33.
[2] Tertullian, Apol. § 9.
[3] Ibid. Adv. Marcion. i. § 28.
[4] Tertullian, Apol. § 26.
[5] Cyprian, De Lapsis, p. 190.
[6] Tertullian, Apol. § 28.

Peter are but the forerunners of long and elaborate arguments in the Apologies. In those Apologies they maintained that, had they projected any independent empire of their own, they would not have so readily exposed themselves to death, and the annihilation of their ambitious hopes by a frank confession;[1] that they could not worship the Emperor, to be sure, but that they offered up their prayers to God in his behalf, wishing him prosperity with greater sincerity than many of his own heathen subjects, who, whilst they affected a zeal for his life and health, would be better pleased to see an end of him, and with it the largess of a new reign.[2] Nay, that the welfare of the Emperor formed one subject of petition in the devotions of the Christian congregation, agreeably to the instructions of the Apostle, who would have us pray for "kings and for all in authority;" that in their public service there were clauses to the effect that "they might have a long life, a secure reign, a trusty household, a brave army, a faithful senate, a loyal people, quiet times, and whatever else could be desired by a man and a monarch."[3] And it may be added, that this language, preserved more or less in the Primitive Liturgies, has found its way, with so much of antiquity besides, into our own Prayer-Book, and is perhaps at the bottom of those frequent references to the sovereign in it, which have been sometimes ascribed to the courtly taste of a more modern age.

The effects of these severe laws, and of the violence with which they were executed, or were liable to be executed, were partly concealed, partly apparent. That many were deterred from embracing the Gospel, which had to be bought at such a price, cannot be doubted; that vast numbers who had professed it became faint-hearted and fell away, we know for certain, the difficulty of deal-

[1] Justin Mart. Apol. § 11.
[2] Ibid. § 17; Tertullian, Apol. § 35.
[3] Tertullian, Apol. § 30.

ing with the lapsed being one of the most serious which beset the early Church; that some equivocation and loose morality were the fruits of such a trial, is but too probable; some perhaps flattering themselves that by denying themselves to be Christians they were not actually denying Christ;[1] and some, refining yet further and persuading themselves that it was a matter of indifference under what name the Supreme Being was worshipped, whether Jehovah or Jupiter, provided the direction of the homage was really right.[2] But still the providence of God, which watches over his Church, did not allow the evil to be unmixed, so ordering it, that if some souls were lost, through fear of persecution, others were gained by witnessing the heroism with which it was sustained; and that the prayers put up even then, and which still continue to stand in the Liturgy of our own Church, for "persecutors and slanderers," that God would turn their hearts; for "peace and concord;" for "those who stand, that they may be strengthened; and for those who fall, that they may be raised up;" should not be uttered in vain.[3]

[1] Tertullian, Scorpiace, § 9.

[2] Origen, Exhort. ad Martyr. § 46; Contra Cels. i. § 24; iv. § 48; v. § 46.

[3] Apostol. Constit. viii. c. 11; Cyprian, Ep. xxxi.

CHAPTER IX.

Third Obstacle to the Progress of the Gospel.—The Heretics.—Their Endeavours to Damage the Authority of Scripture.—Closer Investigation of it by the Church.—Vigilance exercised with respect to the Canon of Scripture.—Extravagant Interpretations by the Heretics.—The Church's Declaration of its own Expositions.—Abuse of Tradition by the Heretics.—Proper Use of it by the Church.—Pretensions of the Heretics.—Their Dogmas subversive of Morality.—Alluded to by St. Jude.—Affected the Ceremonies of the Church.

THE two classes we have hitherto contemplated as those which presented the chief obstacles to the progress of the Gospel were the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*. There was a third, which perhaps stood in its way still more effectually —the *Heretics*. From these three quarters, Cyprian emphatically tells us, the troubles of the Christians proceeded.[1] The Church, as we have already seen, had a doctrine and discipline of its own. In that doctrine and discipline its members continued stedfast; such as were daily added to them still conforming to it. If any doubt on these points arose, as might be the case even during the lives of the Apostles, and was sure to be the case when they should be no more, those Apostles suggested principles by the application of which the uncertainty might be settled. One principle was, what has obtained from the first? "Let that abide in you," says St. John, "which ye have heard *from the beginning*. If that which ye have heard *from the beginning* shall remain in you, ye also

[1] Cyprian, De Zelo et Livore, p. 254.

shall continue in the Son, and in the Father."[1] Be assured you are not wrong, so long as you are true to that which has been maintained since the Gospel was established—*Quod semper*. Another principle was, what has obtained *universally?* "Timothy will bring you into remembrance," writes St. Paul to the Corinthians, "of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach *every where in every Church*."[2] And again, after certain directions given to these same Corinthians, he adds, "so ordain I in *all Churches*."[3] Be still further assured you are not wrong, if you are in accordance with the Church universal—*Quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*.

Still, founded, as these rules were, both on common sense and apostolical authority, there very soon sprang up in the Church men who were disposed to take exception to them, who preferred judging for themselves to submitting to such prescription. These were *Heretics*, or, in other words, persons who would *choose* conclusions for themselves in religious matters, and not be governed by the precepts of the Church;—Heretics, whatever affront people may now feel at the name, being simply *pickers* and *choosers* of their own creed and discipline, irrespectively of the Church's traditional teaching.[4] The very existence of such persons in the most primitive times, enough in itself to show (what has been already shown by direct evidence), that the character of the Church was even then restrictive: that it had creeds which were dogmatical, and therefore offensive; discipline and rites that laid a restraint on the licence of self-will, and therefore resented.

It is not convenient in the present stage of this History to describe the several heresies which disfigured the early

[1] 1 John ii. 24.
[2] 1 Cor. iv. 17.
[3] Ibid. vii. 17.
[4] Tertullian, De Præscript. § 6; Irenæus, v. c. 20, § 1.

Church; my object is simply to set forth the several obstacles which impeded the Gospel in its first establishment and advance; and in accordance with that, I shall describe in general terms the nature of the hindrances which Heresy presented to it.

In the first place, it was a property of Heresy to damage the authority of Scripture. Even the Old Testament suffered greatly at the hands of the early Heretics. Puzzling themselves with the origin of evil (for this question lay at the bottom of almost all primitive heresy), they invented two gods, the one Just, of whom they made a scape-goat, the other Good. To the Just, which indeed was an euphemism with them for the cruel and vindictive, and with whose character they made free, they ascribed the Revelation of the Old Testament, and affected to point out the contrast it presented to the New Testament, which they assigned to the Good, as though enough in itself to show that its author was not the same. Accordingly they attacked the morals of the Old Testament, aggravated its difficulties, filled it with inconsistencies as compared with the Gospel. One of the fraternity, indeed, producing an elaborate work on this subject, entitled "Antitheses,"[1] debased it to the level of their Demiurgus, and represented it as altogether dissolved by the Advent of Jesus, whose mission was from the Good God.[2]

The New Testament they treated little better, disputing its substance: some denying one book to be canonical, some another; some the Acts of the Apostles,[3] some all the Gospels except that of St. Luke, and almost that.[4] Some admitting the Epistles of St. Paul, and rejecting all others;[5] some receiving certain amongst those Epistles

[1] Tertullian, Adv. Marcion. i. c. 20; iv. c. 1.

[2] Irenæus, i. c. 27, § 1, 2.

[3] Tertullian, De Præscript. § 17. 22; De Carne Christi, § 2.

[4] Tertullian, Adv. Marcion. iv. § 2. 5.

[5] Ibid. § 3.

only;[1] some again mutilating such Books as they pretended to acknowledge on the whole, and dressing them to their own purposes.[2] Indeed, to such an extent was this licence carried by the Heretics, that Tertullian makes it a plea for declining to argue with them on the grounds of Scripture; it was impossible to tell what they would accept, and what they would repudiate; his treatise "De Præscriptione Hæreticorum" being in fact a demurrer (for that is the force of the title) to the prosecution of the question on a basis which presented nothing stable or determinate. Of course all this was calculated to produce the greatest confusion in the Church, to perplex its members, and cripple its immediate advance.

I say its *immediate* advance, for we are now considering the impediments which the Gospel encountered at its first appearance; eventually, God overruled this opposition for good, as He did direct persecution itself; and that which seemed a serious hindrance to the cause, and for a time was so, became under his controlling hand a powerful help. For this controversy with the Heretics respecting the authority of the documents on which the Christians relied, led to the instant investigation of it. The Church was put upon the defence of its Canon, whilst the means of defending it were accessible—whilst the proofs were forthcoming of the authenticity of its Books. It is highly probable, that had no Heresies arisen in the Church till the sixth or seventh century, we should never have had the Canon of the Scriptures satisfactorily established: so true was it, even in this sense, that "there must be heresies, that they which are approved might be made manifest."[3] As it was, the investigation arose whilst the Author could be identified; the cha-

[1] Tertullian, Adv. Marcion. v. § 21.

[2] Tertullian, De Carne Christi, § 3, 4. 7.

[3] 1 Cor. xi. 19.

racter of his hand was known; persons were living who had heard him with their own ears acknowledge the writing; incidents in his life necessarily implied that it was his; he had never disowned it, though aware that it was ascribed to him, and circulated in his name, and that serious mischief would accrue to the Church if the report was false and yet uncontradicted.[1] Moreover, that I am not indulging in any hypothetical case, when I am supposing such vigilance to be exercised with respect to the Canon of Scripture, is clear, from facts which may be adduced. Thus, Serapion, a Bishop of Antioch, in the second century, writes to Rhosson, a Church in Cilicia, respecting a reputed Gospel of St. Peter, circulating in that Church, which he had at first regarded with favour, but which on examination he had rejected, the object of his letter being mainly to inform them of this fact, and to tell them, that though receiving Peter and the other Apostles as he would receive Christ, still that spurious writings passing under their names he repudiated, being accustomed to investigate such matters, and aware that the Church had not come into possession of such by regular tradition.[2] Indeed, all ecclesiastical documents appear to have been most rigorously examined before they were admitted by the Church, insomuch, that Cyprian having received a letter by one Crementius, a sub-deacon, purporting to come from the Presbyters and Deacons at Rome, and giving an account of the circumstances of that Church, not satisfied with scrutinising the sense, the characters, and the very paper of the letter, in order to determine its authenticity and genuineness, and to convince himself that "nothing had been added to the truth, or diminished therefrom," returned it to the parties for their indorsement, "it being a very grave matter," says

[1] See Dodwell, Dissert. in Irenæum, i. § 35.

[2] Routh, Reliq. Sacr. i. p. 471.

he, "if the truth of a clerical Epistle be corrupted by any lie or fraud,"[1] a sentiment which had been strongly expressed long before, by Irenæus, who says, that "no ordinary punishment awaits those who either augment Scripture or reduce it."[2] Accordingly, so early a writer as he is, he charges the Heretics repeatedly with "adding an unutterable number of apocryphal and spurious Scriptures,"[3] a phrase he could not have used without being prepared to show the genuineness of those to which the addition was made; with "transgressing the order and series of the Scriptures,"[4] another expression implying the same thing; and, indeed, though all we learn from him as to the contents of the Canon is incidental, we can establish our own within a very little, even by him alone.[5] Tertullian, too, another witness of nearly the same date, leads us to infer that the adjustment of the Canon was one of the several subjects of discussion which engaged the attention of Councils of the Church, in, and before his own time;[6] and in one instance, like Irenæus, brought into court by the existence of the Heretics, he challenges boldly, a reference to the "authenticæ literæ" of the Apostles, as preserved in the apostolic Churches; whether by that term is to be understood true copies of the Epistles as they came from the hands of the Apostles, of which the Churches addressed in them had been the keepers, and which they had been in the habit of using daily in their public service, or whether the very autographs themselves of the Apostles—for even the latter supposition has something to be said in its behalf, though high names are against it. If the early Christians were

[1] Cyprian, Ep. iii.
[2] Irenæus, v. c. 30, § 1.
[3] Ibid. i. c. 20, § 1.
[4] Ibid. i. c. 8, § 1.
[5] His testimony does not happen to touch the 3rd Epistle of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Epistle to Philemon.
[6] Tertullian, De Pudicitiâ, § 10.

alive to the value of the ashes of the saint or martyr, which they certainly were,[1] is it not to be presumed that their reverence for the manuscripts of those who were the greatest of both, would be proportionate, and that they would cherish them with the most scrupulous care? The emphasis in the phrase before us does not lie in the word "authenticæ" merely, but in the word "ipsæ" also; and though a passage may be found in Tertullian, where "authenticus" simply means "original,"[2] another may as certainly be produced from Cyprian, a writer of the same school as Tertullian, where it means "autograph."[3] But be this as it may, at all events it appears that in a very early stage of the Gospel indeed, certain Scriptures, and those constituting the great bulk of the New Testament, were of acknowledged character; that such character had been tested and determined by the Church, and that the Church had been provoked to this scrutiny by the Heretics, who, whilst embarrassing the progress of Christianity for a time, were preparing the way for its ultimate success by establishing its Canon.

What is true of the Canon of Scripture, is equally true of the *text* of the several books which compose it. The mutilations of that text, and the various innovations upon it propounded by the Heretics, led the Church to the careful examination and verification of it, so that the *immediate* damage which the cause of the Gospel sustained by the doubts cast on the readings of Scripture, was in the end more than balanced by the confidence acquired through investigation in the integrity of such as were received. Still, for the present, these doubts were an obstacle to the Gospel's free course.

Another arose out of the manner in which the Heretics perverted the meaning of such Scriptures as they received

[1] Martyr. Ignatii, § 6.
[2] Bp. Kaye, Tertullian, p. 307.
[3] Cyprian, Ep. 3, "Epistola authentica."

in common with the Church; the strange conclusions they extorted from them; indeed, the utter ambiguity which Holy Writ would have assumed if such handling as it met with on the part of these Heretics had been legitimate. They found, or affected to find, the names of their Æons in the nomenclature of the New Testament; their numbers, in numbers incidentally mentioned in the Parables, or elsewhere; as in the several hours, for instance, at which the householder hired the labourers. They practised all manner of devices with the dubious meaning of the word "Logos," admitting as it did of a rationalistic as well as personal sense; and altogether troubled and rendered turbid the waters of life.

Still, serious as was this impediment to the cause of Christianity, for awhile, in its consequences, it tended to advance it; the occasion of falling once more overruled by God to the Church's support. For the extravagant interpretations assigned by these Heretics to passages in Holy Writ provoked the Church to a declaration of its own expositions of them, expositions which involved almost all the principal articles of the Christian faith: the Godhead of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the Atonement, the Resurrection, Grace, Justification, the Sacraments,—in short, scarcely one of the great questions which have since agitated the Church fails to find a place collaterally or immediately in the argument between the orthodox and the early heretic; so that nothing can be more unfounded than Daillè's objection to the early Fathers, that they are of no use to us who live in an age when religious controversies have assumed quite another form from that with which they were familiar, and turn upon topics on which they delivered no opinion. On the contrary, thanks to the Heretics of their own day, their testimony is most available for ours, indeed the more so because not meant for it. Another inconvenience of

heresy was, that it shook the credit of the Church by damaging a support on which it partially leaned—tradition. When Scripture failed the Heretics, as it constantly did, even in spite of their unscrupulous manipulation of it, they had recourse to tradition—a tradition which they pretended to have originated in the *vivâ voce* teaching of the Apostles, and of which they were in possession by descent.[1] There was, of course, no limit to the shapes they could give to apostolical doctrine, with such an apparatus as this at their command; and the effect of such pretensions, had they been admitted, would have been to subvert all trust in creeds and canons, and to substitute for them principles of scepticism in doctrine and licence in discipline. In fact the imagination of these Heretics teemed with extravagances, and schemes of religion, which seem to us to be mere dreams of delirium, were propagated by them with a success for a time which only excites our wonder. It is evident from the work of Irenæus that the world was overrun by them, and that of all the many embarrassments which beset the early march of the Gospel none was so universal as that occasioned by heresy. The tares sprang up so plentifully amongst the wheat as almost to choke it for a season. The mischief, however, was ephemeral; the advantage in attendance on it, as in other cases which we have been contemplating, was made by God's providence to be enduring. Innumerable as were the followers of Simon Magus in the time of Irenæus,[2] by the time of Origen there were not thirty in existence anywhere.[3] Whilst the gross abuse of tradition thus started by the Heretics called up the Primitive Church to defend, define, and exemplify its use in an argument quite invaluable; an argument which, as it did our Reformers excellent ser-

[1] Irenæus, iii. c. 2, § 3.
[2] Ibid. iv. c. 33, § 3
[3] Origen, Contra Cels. i. § 57.

vice, so does it furnish us at this day with some of the very best suggestions by which to vindicate their handiwork. Would that many of the volunteer champions of that great settlement were more familiar with them than they are! How often would they then be saved from shooting the arrow o'er the house, to hurt a brother!

For the Church, it then appeared, did not repudiate tradition; on the contrary, it accepted the challenge of the Heretics, and professed itself prepared to defend its doctrine and constitution by tradition as well as by Scripture, only the tradition must be pure—such as had originated with the Apostles—such as had prevailed universally—in short, it insisted upon the tests being applied to it which I have already described as sanctioned by St. Paul and St. John, namely that the substance of it should have "been from the beginning," and its "range" "in all Churches." Tradition like this it acknowledged to be trustworthy, and, moreover, affirmed that it would be found coincident with Scripture wherever Scripture declared itself. "Go to the apostolic Churches," says one of the mouth-pieces of the early Church, in a passage to which I have already had occasion partially to allude, for it is one that frequently presents itself to a writer on primitive ecclesiastical history, "Go to the apostolic Churches, in which the very seats of the Apostles preside over their own places, in which their own authentic writings are read, speaking with the voice of each, and making the face of each present to the eye. Is Achaia near to thee? Thou hast Corinth. If thou art not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi, thou hast the Thessalonians. If thou canst travel into Asia, thou hast Ephesus; but if thou art near to Italy, thou hast Rome. Let us see what she hath learned,

what taught, what fellowship she hath had with the Churches of Africa likewise. She acknowledgeth one God, the Lord, the Creator of the universe; and Christ Jesus the Son of God, the Creator, born of the Virgin Mary; and the resurrection of the flesh. She joineth the Law and the Prophets with the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, and hence drinketh in her faith. That faith she sealeth with water, clotheth with the Holy Spirit, feedeth with the Eucharist, exhorteth to martyrdom, and so receiveth no one in opposition to this teaching."[1] Thus did the early Church join issue with the Heretic, sending him for judgment on controverted points to Churches founded by Apostles; to any or all of them, as might be convenient to himself—to Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Rome; all established by St. Paul, St. Peter, or by both; and all, though distant from each other, found to be teaching the same doctrine, to be following the same customs.

It is whilst maintaining the authority of legitimate *tradition* that Irenæus, in his third Book, developes so many of the features of the Primitive Church in which that principle is concerned. The Creed, for instance, at least the substance of it, which had ever been used in the Churches at baptism as the profession of faith, from the Apostles' days to his own. The apostolical succession of ministers, which had continued in them in unbroken order during the same period; the Church ever represented by him as a body of men who remained stedfast in the fellowship of the Apostles and of their substitutes, appointed by imposition of hands, from generation to generation, and in the doctrine and discipline transmitted through that channel.[2] Indeed, the argument most fre-

[1] Tertullian, De Præscript. Hæret. § 36.

[2] Irenæus, iii. c. 3.

quently urged against the Heretics was this radical defect in the connection of their teachers, their want of the succession.[1]

Still, all this battling on the subject of tradition was unfriendly to the peace and prosperity of the Church, at the moment. It unsettled men's minds, and retarded the Gospel's march. It turned creeds into bones of contention, articles of faith into articles of strife, and stirred foundations, rather than raised on them a superstructure.

For the Heretics, it may be further observed, were far from confining themselves to theory on the subject of Tradition. They seconded their speculations by act and example, confounding, as far as in them lay, the organization of the Church, and bringing into contempt ecclesiastical prescription. They set at nought all canonical forms; they were above ordinances. Churchmen, who were the Animal, might have need of them, but they were the Spiritual, the Perfect.[2] They were for fundamentals; and matters which were represented as such by Churchmen, in their struggles with Heretics, were nothing of the kind, were swelled into importance in order to foster a quarrel.[3] "I will not pass by," says Tertullian, in one of his graphic passages, characteristic of the working of these principles, and the disorder occasioned by them—"I will not pass by the life and conversation of the heretics, which is without gravity, authority, discipline. In the first place, it is a matter of uncertainty who is a catechumen, who a believer; they meet alike, hear alike, pray alike—heathens with them, if such chance to come in. They throw what is holy to the dogs, and give their pearls, though not real pearls, to the swine. They call

[1] Tertullian, Adv. Marcion. iv. § 5, and De Præscript. passim, § 19. 21. 31, 32.

[2] Irenæus, i. c. 6, § 1, 2. 4.

[3] Tertullian, De Jejuniis, § 1.

that simplicity which is, in fact, the prostration of discipline; our concern for which latter they call pandering.[1] They are for peace everywhere, with everybody; for they care not what differences there may be among themselves, provided they conspire for the destruction of the one truth. All boast, all make profession of knowledge. The catechumens are perfect before they are taught. Then the women among the heretics, how bold are they! how they dare to teach, to contend, to exorcise, to make promises of healing, perhaps even to baptize! Then the ordinations of the heretics are rash, light, inconstant. Now they appoint novices, now persons engaged in mere secular matters, now apostates from us, in order that they may hold them by their love of distinction, seeing that they cannot by truth. Nowhere is promotion more easy than in the camp of the rebels; for to be found there, is enough to secure advancement. Accordingly one is bishop to-day, another to-morrow. He is to-day a deacon who is to-morrow a reader, to-day a presbyter who is to-morrow a layman. For they assign priestly offices even to laymen. And what shall I say touching the administration of the word? their object being not to convert the heathen, but to subvert us."[2] And then Tertullian goes on to speak more at large of the schisms and sub-schisms which existed amongst them; the followers of Valentinus, for instance, claiming the same right to split from him which he claimed to split from the Church; the principle of their unity consisting in a common desire to pull down.

Nay, the very Sacraments of the Church were perverted by the Heretics both in substance and ceremonial, the meaning of them misconstrued, the ministration of them travestied. For they, too, had their baptism or ini-

[1] "Meretricious embellishment," Newman's Arians, p. 152.

[2] Tertullian, De Præscript. § 41.

tiation; a device of Satan, says Irenæus, to defeat canonical baptism.[1] It rather served to secure an entrance into a state of knowledge than a state of grace. It was not imparted in the name of the Three Persons of the Trinity, but in other names: in those of the Unknown Father, of Truth, of the Mother of all Things, and many more. It was often accompanied by an extraordinary and unintelligible jargon meant to astonish the bystanders. Yet water was used, and an unction, as was the custom in the orthodox service, and certain interrogatories were put to the party, wholly different from those which formed a portion of the baptismal office of the Church,—indeed, mysterious and absurd, but still, no doubt, meant to ape the Church ritual; and, whether meant or not, calculated to bring it into contempt.

In like manner they had their Eucharist, bearing much the same relation to that of the Church as their baptism or initiation did to its corresponding ordinance. They had their consecration of the cup; the wine mixed with water; their invocation upon that element, not of the Holy Ghost, but of "Silence" or "Grace," one of their primitive Æons, whose blood they feigned was thus made to distil into the chalice; the colour of the liquor changed, in the case of one of their teachers who combined the conjuror with the heretic, by some sleight of hand, to suit the theory.[2] The whole proceeding represented by the Father who describes it, as dictated by the suggestion of Satan, to shake the faith of Churchmen. It is true that such gross caricature of the Church's most sacred institutions at least caused them to be canvassed, drew forth from Christian writers incidental expressions calculated to fix and determine their exact nature and original administration, and thus to inform the minds of the faithful on the subject of them, not only then, but for

[1] Irenæus, i. c. 21, § 2.

[2] Irenæus, i. c. 13, § 1, 2. 4.

ever. Still, on the whole, the embarrassment which the Gospel must have experienced in its early efforts to subdue the world from the propagation of precepts and practices so much in contradiction to its own, cannot be disputed by those who are acquainted with the obstacles similar in kind, which dissent at this moment presents to the successful action of the Church.

The last property of heresy which I shall name as shedding a disastrous effect on the early progress of the Gospel, was the licentiousness which seems to have attended it; and as the heathen, little accustomed to discriminate in such matters, confounded heretics and orthodox under the common name of Christians, the evil character and the prejudice belonging to it, cleaved to both alike.[1]

Mr. Gibbon, whose bias, in dealing with Christianity and all that relates to it, is notorious, intimates his fears that the primitive Fathers, in speaking of the Heretics, are very frequently calumniators.[2] Certainly what we know of them is now to be gathered principally from the writings of the Fathers, their own works having perished, except so far as quotations from them exist in the pages of their antagonists. Still, expressions occur in the Fathers, when treating of them, which would lead us to think that they did not deal with them in mere ignorance and malice. Justin Martyr, for instance, wrote a book about them, as he tells us; but in what spirit he did it appears from an observation which escapes him when mentioning it—an observation quite in the teeth of Mr. Gibbon's surmise—that whether they were really guilty of the scandals imputed to them, which he names, he could not affirm.[3] Irenæus, who speaks of them in much detail, and also assigns to them the same evil report, distinctly tells us, that he did not sit down to compose his

[1] Irenæus, i c. 25, § 3.
[2] Decline and Fall, ii. p. 283, Milman's Ed.
[3] Justin Mart. Apol. § 26.

work till he had read the writings of the disciples of Valentinus—the Coryphæus of the company—conversed with some of their number, and possessed himself of their sentiments;[1] and, moreover, affirms, that he could not have believed such iniquities to have existed amongst them, as those to which he alludes, but for their own documents, in which they are actually recorded and commented upon;[2] and prays for their conversion in terms which betray no malevolence towards them, but quite the reverse.[3] Clemens Alexandrinus has a word to say upon these Heretics in his turn, but neither does he indulge in vague and indefinite censure of them; on the contrary, he quotes from their own authors propositions which he undertakes to refute.[4] He refers to writers, as to Plato, for instance, whose sentiments, he contends, they misrepresent; and all this where the question at issue affects their morals in the most signal degree. We have a fragment of a letter of Serapion a bishop of Antioch, of the second century, a letter in which he warns his correspondent against the heresy of Montanus; but this he does not do till he had taken pains to ascertain the precise nature of that heresy from persons in high office in the Church who had made it their business actually to go to Phrygia, its head-quarters, in order to get accurate information respecting it.[5] Origen expressly tells us that as the Heretics were constantly resorting to him, he had made it his business to examine carefully their dogmas, in that, only following the example of Pantænus and Heraclas, leaders, like himself, in the school of Alexandria;[6] a habit in him to be believed the more readily, as it exactly corresponds with his treatment of the work of

[1] Irenæus, Præf.
[2] Ibid. i. c. 25, § 5.
[3] Ibid. iii. c. 25.
[4] Clemens Alexand. Stromat. iii. p. 514, et seq.
[5] Routh, Reliq. Sacr. i. p. 470.
[6] Fragm. Epist. vol. i. p. 4.

Celsus (not a heretic but an infidel), whose very words he produces at length, when he is arguing against him. These passages, which are the first that present themselves, are enough to show that the Fathers charging the Heretics with gross immorality did not speak unadvisedly, and that there is no reason for doubting the truth of their reports.

But besides all this, there is a manifest consistency between the doctrines they are said to have held, and the lives they are represented as leading: loose and licentious morals were a natural consequence of such tenets as theirs; and we cannot suppose that with respect to these at least the Fathers could be mistaken. The controversy between the two parties was a very long and learned one, and the Treatises which still survive on the side of the Church are precise and elaborate. If the Heretics maintained, as they did maintain, that they were *essentially* superior to the world at large in their original constitution, and could not perish, owing to the very property of their being; what wonder that they should indulge in all impurities without restraint, and compare themselves to gold which suffers no change for the worse even if it be plunged into the mire?[1] Again, if it was another of their principles, as it was, that the soul is to be passed from one body to another, till it is perfected in all knowledge (for knowledge was their idol), no matter what—such being the qualification for the Pleroma; and that in order to render this migration from body to body needless, the most must be made of the present state of being, and the soul be familiarized with every action of which man is capable, the very basest and most abominable not excepted, lest in the absence of such information it should have to be remanded after death to some other receptacle in which to make up its defect; it follows, as a natural

[1] Irenæus, i. c. 6, § 2.

consequence, that the seductions of the worst elements with which the soul had to be conversant would prove irresistible, and the experimentalist be debased in the most grovelling vice.[1] Once more: if it was another of their dogmas, that Good and Bad are merely conventional terms, and that such was one of their tenets there can be no doubt, for whilst Irenæus records the fact, he also tells us, that on that account they denounced certain texts of Scripture which were opposed to them, and names those texts, as though he had writings of their own before him, on the faith of which he made his assertion; if, I say, this was one of their dogmas, that Good and Bad were merely matters of human opinion, and had nothing intrinsic to justify the designation; it is clear that the practical conclusions which would follow from such a principle, could not fail to be most pernicious to morality.[2] Still further: if another of their notions was (and doubtless such was the case), that *matter* was so evil in its nature as to be incapable of refinement, and unfit to be propagated;[3] that, accordingly, there was no resurrection of the flesh;[4] and that marriage, which was one instrument for continuing such material system, was to be repudiated;[5] it was impossible that a door should not be opened by such doctrines for detestable abuses of life and conversation; so that, on the whole, nothing can be more credible than that the representation made by the Fathers of the habits of the Heretics is, in the main, trustworthy and true. In fact, it is highly probable, that the persons alluded to in the Epistle of St. Jude, as "certain men who had crept in," who "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness," "filthy dreamers," were these

[1] Irenæus, i. c. 25, § 4; ii. c. 32.

[2] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 28; Irenæus, ii. c. 32, § 1.

[3] Irenæus, i. c. 4, § 2; c. 6, § 1.

[4] Ibid. i. c. 22, § 1, et alibi.

[5] Ibid. i. c. 28, § 1.

very parties. Clemens Alexandrinus, indeed, expressly construes the passage of the Carpocratians, and other similar Heretics,[1] and Theophylact, of the Nicolaitans, Valentinians, and Simonians;[2] for the sects even of later times nominally, had already struck root in the days of the Apostles. And the like expressions in the second Epistle of St. Peter (ch. ii.), "false teachers," men who "bring in damnable heresies," "who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness," Theophylact understands in the same sense.

Meanwhile, nothing was more natural than for the heathens to confound the Heretics with the Christians in general. They were so diverse in kind, diverged from the orthodox in so many various degrees; some differing from them, perhaps, on few, and those not very important points; those again, fading into others of more extreme opinions; and these last terminating in another class, as irreverent as the worst infidels;—that it was impossible to judge of them correctly without exercising much discrimination, whereas the heathen were singularly indisposed to exercise any whatever, and, accordingly, comprised them all under a single denomination, and that the denomination of Christian; for with the Christians they certainly came into existence, derived their origin from them; and if the confusion served to add still greater offence to a name odious enough in itself, no harm would be felt to be in that. Add to this, that the Heretics professed to be Christians.[3] The followers of Simon Magus, the leader of all heresy, even continued to affect, Eusebius tells us, the modest philosophy of the Christians,[4] and, indeed, the same author intimates elsewhere, that it was the assumption of the name of Chris-

[1] Clemens Alexand. Stromat. iii. § 2, p. 515.

[2] Theophylact, *in loc.*

[3] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 26; Tertu l. de Carne Christi, § 15.

[4] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. ii. c. 13.

tian, which enabled these Heretics to effect the mischief they did.[1] Justin Martyr imputes the same tactics to Menander, the pupil of Simon, and to Marcion, as well as to the schools which proceeded from them, however opposed they might be to one another;[2] and it is no doubt, to these Heretics that he is looking, when he says to the Emperors in his Apology, "We make it our request, that you would punish those who, whilst they offend against the laws of Christ in their lives, still go under the title of Christians."[3] Indeed, the Fathers, who are at a loss how to designate them with propriety, sometimes call them "Christian Sadducees." The Montanists, if we may judge of them from Tertullian, did not ever acknowledge themselves to have absolutely renounced the Church. On the contrary, after he had joined the Montanists, he is still as free as ever in his animadversions on Heretics, classing them with heathens, and denominating them scorpions, the very title of one of his Treatises being "an antidote against their poison," as though he was himself unconscious of having swerved in fundamentals, or unwilling to own it. The author of the newly-discovered Treatise entitled "Philosophumena,"—Hippolytus, in all probability—scarcely regards the Montanists as heretics—*αἱρετικώτεροι*, or sub-heretics, he calls them, and adds, that they confessed "the Father, the God of the Universe, and the Creator of all things, as did the Church, and whatever the Gospel testifies concerning Christ."[4] The Heretics in general seem to have affected the rites and ceremonies of the Church, administering, *e. g.* a baptism of their own, and an eucharist of their own—though both of them gross and profane caricatures of those of the Church—as they did also the orders of

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 26.
[2] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 26.
[3] Ibid. § 16.
[4] Philosophumena, p. 275. See Dr. Wordsworth's Hippolytus, p. 35.

ministry of the Church; Irenæus having constantly to remind them, that however they might adopt the name of bishop and priest, the virtue of those offices was nothing, by reason of the want of the apostolical succession; and Eusebius even telling us of a case of a presbyter of the heresy of Marcion, who suffered martyrdom under Aurelius.[1] Well, therefore, might indifferent lookers-on be excused if they did not know exactly under what head to place the Heretics, seeing that the parties themselves were at a loss about it.

In conclusion, the remark may be repeated which has been made already so often—that grievous as was the scandal which the Heretics inflicted on the character of the Christians for a time, and serious as was the obstacle thus presented to the progress of the Gospel, the evil was not unqualified. The accusations against the Christians thus engendered, were met by indignant contradictions; by challenges to the closest scrutiny of their lives and conduct; by bold appeals to the experience of those who were most intimately associated with them, their domestics and slaves; by candid declarations of their actual habits and rules; such vindications of themselves naturally serving in the long run, when it was found to be just, to improve the knowledge of the new sect; to establish their credit; to preserve for future generations, when the faith of many should have waxed cold, a more exact idea than they would otherwise have had of the Primitive Christian, his works and ways; and so put them in possession of a profitable standard by which to try their own.

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 15.

CHAPTER X.

The state of the Roman Empire as affecting the Advance of the Gospel.—Early Spread of Christianity.—Witnesses to the Extension of the Church in the first three Centuries.—Justin Martyr.—Theophilus.—Irenæus.—Tertullian.—Minutius Felix.—Hippolytus.—Origen.—Cyprian.—Unfairness of Gibbon.—Strength of the Church antecedent to the Conversion of Constantine.

I HAVE now developed, as I conceive, the broad basis of the history of the Primitive Church; I have laid bare the trunk out of which it arose, and the nature of the soil in which it was planted. It advanced according to this beginning; its character and circumstances from generation to generation still retaining the original cast, so that our History will preserve its own continuity, the subsequent chapters shooting out of the first, whilst it traces that of the Church century by century, the growth it made, the persecution it experienced, during that period; these three topics constituting, in fact, the annals of the Primitive Church. I said in a former chapter that the Roman Government took alarm at the progress of Christianity too late to arrest it. The secular mechanism of that Empire had been the very means, under God's invisible guidance, of giving it effect. It took possession of measures set on foot for quite other purposes, and made them minister to its own ends. The resources of the Roman Government proved its own. That which had been devised for the consolidation of an earthly tyranny established the freedom of the Gospel, and mili-

tary ambition became unwittingly the handmaid of the Gospel of Peace.

It would belong, perhaps, to a later period in our History to trace the development and application of these provisions; suffice it to say, at present, that the civil division of the Roman Empire served eventually as the ecclesiastical of the Gospel economy; that the dioceses, the provinces, and the parishes of the Church, had all their prototypes in the respective sections of the Roman State;[1] that when the politic Roman was shaping the surface of the earth, as he imagined, to simplify and perpetuate his own dominion, he was, in truth, but mapping it out for the occupation of a Christian Church; that in him and in that act of his, "the Most High was dividing the nations," with a reference to a better inheritance;[2] and that like one of those dissolving views now familiar to us, the baser edifice gradually faded away, to be transfigured into a temple consecrated to the glory of God.

But without as yet, at all events, adverting further to the more technical elements of the construction of the Roman Commonwealth, of which the Gospel eventually availed itself, and which did not come into operation as influencing the system of the Church till a later date than the first century, and till its polity was more nearly complete; let us look to the advantages resulting to the cause of Christianity from the general condition of the Roman Commonwealth, and learn to admire the providence of God, which allowed that monster empire to establish itself, and to perfect its organization before it trusted the precious deposit of the Gospel to mankind.

Meanwhile, how sobering is the thought, how calculated to reduce the worldling's estimate of the actors and exploits on life's stage, to consider that the greatest of

[1] Wordsworth, Theophilus Anglicanus, part i. c. xii.

[2] Deut. xxxii. 8.

them after all are but secondary and subservient ordinances—scaffolding, itself perishable and to pass away; of value only because tributary to a structure that shall be beautiful and enduring.

The empire of Rome, vast as it was when the Gospel began to dawn, bounded on the west by the Atlantic; on the north by Britain, the Rhine, and the Danube; on the east by the Euphrates; on the south by the sands and deserts of Arabia and Africa, and extended even yet further than this under Trajan; was as perfect in its organic arrangements, and as manageable, as if the whole had been but a single city. It had its roads, wonderful even in their ruins, which, radiating from the Forum of Rome, traversed the countries subject to its sway, however distant and difficult of access, and supplied lines of communication from the seat of government, at the capital, to the remotest borders of its territories. Posts, with relays of horses at suitable intervals, were established along them, and a constant intercourse kept up between the centre and extremities of this busy portion of the earth's surface. True to history, no doubt, was the great scholar as well as poet, when bringing before the Saviour, in the person of Satan, the tempting array of the powers and resources of Rome, he turned his eyes towards

> "The conflux issuing forth, or entering in;
> Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces
> Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
> Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power,
> Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings:
> Or embassies from regions far remote,
> In various habits, on the Appian road,
> Or on th' Emilian; some from farthest south,
> Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
> Meroe, Nilotic isle; and, more to west,
> The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea;
> From th' Asian kings and Parthian among these,
> From India and the golden Chersonese,

> And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
> Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreath'd;
> From Gallia, Gades, and the British west;
> Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north
> Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool:
> All nations now to Rome obedience pay."[1]

Such was the kind of social circulation perpetually going on in this body politic—such the pulsations of its arteries. The very system by which Rome held its possessions required it. She identified with herself lands the most distant. She adopted into her great family foreign recruits in the shape of municipal cities; and she introduced amongst foreign districts portions of herself, in the shape of domestic colonies. Natives of Rome migrated into the provinces in numbers, farming the revenue there, and holding other gainful posts. The legions of Rome were quartered in them as permanent settlers; and the veterans on their discharge very commonly received lands in the districts they had occupied.

It is impossible to read the New Testament without being struck with the marks of Roman occupation and ownership which present themselves on all sides. At every turn, even in scenes the most remote, the broad arrow of Rome predominates. Roman soldiers appear from time to time, some to ask a blessing, some to receive an admonition, some to maintain the laws. They were in attendance on the cross; they rescue Paul from the people; they escort him and the prisoners to Rome. Roman coins are the money we read of. The householder agrees with the labourers for a denarius. The image and superscription of the coin in common currency is Cæsar's. The poor widow throws into the treasury a quadrans. The two sparrows are sold for an assarius. So of measures, the candle is not to be put under a modius.

[1] Paradise Regained, book iv. line 62.

Rome is the "far country," to which persons in Judæa are described as repairing on matters of business or of dissipation; to waste an estate, to seek a kingdom, "to appeal unto Cæsar." Roman authority institutes a census or taxing—a Roman governor presides over it.

The Roman language contends with the native—the inscription over the cross is in Latin, as well as in Hebrew and Greek. My name is "Legion," says the evil spirit. Herod sends a *speculator* to behead John. Barsabas is surnamed Justus. We read of a "census," a "Prætorium," a "Centurio," a "Colonia," a "Custodia." In the Greek of the country, the phraseology of Rome lurks in its very construction. "Have me excused" (Luke xiv. 18, habe me excusatum); "Give diligence" (Luke xii. 58, da operam); τῷ ὄχλῳ τὸ ἱκανὸν ποιῆσαι (Mark xv. 15); to satisfy the people, populo satisfacere; ὁδὸν ποιεῖν (Mark ii. 23), iter facere; κομψότερον ἔσχε (John iv. 52), melius habuerit; ὕδατος ἁλλομένου (John iv. 14), aquæ salientis.[1]

The impression of Rome thus discovering itself in Judæa, would be found, no doubt, to be as deep in the other provinces of the Empire, had we similar means of detecting it; a surface which comprised, as we have seen, all the most civilized portion of the earth; and the fittest, therefore, to be the scene of any great movement. Asia Proper alone had five hundred populous cities;[2] Gaul twelve hundred; many of them in the south not less considerable then, perhaps, than now; Spain, three hundred and sixty; Africa, three hundred. These, too, connected by ready means of access one with another, and all of them with Rome, the sea itself opposing its interdict in vain; fleets laden with corn for the support of Italy,

[1] See Dr. Maltby's Sermon on the peculiar character of the Greek of the New Testament, p. 44.

[2] Gibbon, i. 86.

loosing from this last province I have named, were constantly traversing the waters of the Mediterranean; and such was the supply of wild beasts of all kinds drawn from the hunting grounds lying within that same continent, for the consumption of the circus and amphitheatre, that even the capture and transmission of them, must have occupied a multitude of hands, and been a source of close approximation between the countries; Titus exhibiting five thousand beasts of various sorts in a single day.[1]

Under the presiding influence of Rome, the earth and all its resources seemed to be at the command of the wealthy and luxurious; things which nature had put asunder Rome combined.

> Nequicquam Deus abscidit
> Prudens Oceano dissociabili
> Terras.

The epicure of those days could have his lampreys from the Straits of Sicily, his eels from the Mæander, his kids from Melos, his mullets from Scyathus, his shell-fish from Pelorus, his oysters from Abydos, his turnips from Mantinæa, his beets from Ascræa, his cockles from Methymna, his soles from Attica, his thrushes from Daphne, his Chalcedonian figs, his pheasants from Phasis, his quails from Egypt, his peacocks from Media,[2] all through the ubiquitous agency of Rome, which had made the world one city, and all the nations of it neighbours. For Christianity, in the first instance, to enjoy the protection, or even the forbearance of a power so universal, as all these symptoms indicate, was of incalculable advantage to it. It gave it a stamp which authorized it to pass current, the world through, unimpeded; whereas, it otherwise would have encountered perpetual obstacles. It furnished it with protection in all the most promising dis-

[1] Sueton. § 7.

[2] Clemens Pædag. ii. c. 1.

tricts of the earth, which otherwise it might have been unsafe to penetrate; and it supplied it with a thousand channels ready made for its use, which, humanly speaking, it could not have created for itself. It was nothing but the apprehension of the Roman displeasure that held the hand of the Jews from endeavouring to extinguish the Gospel at the first: so the Apologists perpetually tell us; and their enmity, had it been left to itself, and not overruled, might have well been fatal to it, for such was the dispersion of that people, that there was scarcely a city of any size, where numbers of them would not have been forthcoming. As it was, the ill favour with which it was regarded by the Jew, rather served to recommend it to the Roman, who held the men of that nation in abhorrence; and the speedy enrolment amongst its teachers of *heathen* converts served to introduce it amongst those who would have resented instruction from a Jew. It was nothing but the tide of human affairs for ever ebbing and flowing from one end to the other of the Roman States, that could have provided a suitable current on which the Gospel could float too, and insinuate itself, with little mechanical exertion of its own, into every nook and corner of the world.

Under such propitious circumstances—all ordered of God to work out his own ends—the spread of Christianity was wonderfully rapid, far more so than we should conclude from the literal history of its progress in the New Testament, unless we develope the hints to that effect contained in it. The numbers of persons from various distant quarters of the world congregated at the feast of Pentecost, to witness, as it proved, the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, and to hear unlettered peasants speak, every man in his own tongue, must have been partly owing to the facility with which the capital of Judæa could be reached, in consequence of the cir-

cumstances I have already detailed. On their dispersion and return to their several homes, they carried along with them the report of the wonders they had seen, "there was no speech or language, but their voices were heard amongst them." Thus must a wide circulation have been given to the principles of the Gospel, even on the very instant of the Ascension; and a second impulse of the same kind, though more limited in its action, was communicated to it very shortly after, at the persecution, on the death of St. Stephen. Accordingly, we find that not only the mother of Timothy was of the faith—he a disciple already when St. Paul first met with him[1]—but even his grandmother, whose conversion to Christianity, therefore, must probably have been very nearly coeval with the first preaching of it; and yet Timothy's connections did not, it should seem, lie at head-quarters, but at Lystra; that Andronicus and Junia, Romans, were in Christ, St. Paul tells us, before him;[2] that we may infer the same of Barnabas of Cyprus, who vouches for St. Paul's sincerity, being himself known to the Churches when St. Paul was not; and, perhaps, of Mnason of the same country, described as "an old disciple,"[3] and yet the conversion of St. Paul is dated by some within a year of our Lord's ascension, and by most chronologers within seven years of that event.[4] Moreover, not to speak of individuals, it is evident that when the future Apostle was journeying in his wrath to Damascus, there were already in that place a considerable body of Christians: from the speech of Ananias, a leader amongst them, it would seem that they had good intelligence of what was going on amongst their brethren of the same way of thinking at Jerusalem,[5] and that there was already a

[1] Acts xvi. 1.
[2] Romans xvi. 7.
[3] Acts xxi. 16.
[4] See Lardner, vol. vi. p. 236, et seq.
[5] Acts ix. 13.

correspondence amongst the scattered congregations. Since one faction of the Corinthians, as St. Paul informs us, arranged themselves under Cephas,[1] it is probable, as I have already observed, that St. Peter had set foot in their town—it is certain that his virtue had by some channel or other reached them; and when St. Paul first landed at Puteoli he found a company of Christians ready to receive him and offer him hospitality, whilst another company from Rome met him at Appii Forum, as though Italy was in possession of Churches before he had ever touched its shores; a fact placed beyond all doubt by a remarkable expression in the Epistle to the Romans (i. 8): "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world;" for, certainly, the conversion of the Roman Christians is here assigned to a far earlier origin than the preaching of St. Paul himself. From expressions which drop from that Apostle, more than once, it would appear that "the word had been running very swiftly," quite independently of him, even in countries which are usually considered the proper fields of his labours. To the Romans, he says, that he had been careful so to shape the course of his ministry as "not to build upon another man's foundations;"[2] and to the Corinthians, that he "would not boast of things without his measure," *i. e.* of other men's labours, "but according to the measure of the rule which God had distributed to him."[3] Who were the parties who had laid these foundations, who had completed these measures, we inquire in vain; and it is not without an ulterior meaning, according to Justin Martyr, that in the Mosaic narrative of the encounter of Israel with Amalek, according to the Septuagint version, Israel is described as smiting that nation typical of the

[1] 1 Cor. i. 12.
[2] Romans xv. 20.
[3] 2 Cor. x. 13.

kingdom of darkness, "with a *secret* hand."[1] Certain it is, the people of Samaria appear to have been ripe for conversion, and the reception of baptism, when Philip first appeared amongst them.[2] And in this instance we may assign, with great probability, the antecedent cause to the conversation which Jesus Himself had held with the woman at the well of Sychar, no long time before, and his tarrying in the city two days.

I am now endeavouring, it will be understood, to detect traces of the very early progress of the Gospel over districts concerning which Scripture is silent, or, if not silent, at least, only suggestive; passing by the more direct records of its course, left us by the Apostles, to which I have called the attention of my readers, in a former chapter, when engaged in the details of their personal history. For I apprehend that those records, if construed literally, would furnish a very inadequate notion of the surface of the world, which the knowledge of the Gospel had covered even within the first century; indeed, of this we shall be more fully persuaded when we have carried our narrative on to the second and third; and when the clear and manifest expansion of it, at that period at least, is seen to bespeak so undeniably the breadth of the previous basis, out of which such a superstructure must have arisen.

But to proceed. The only hint, which the Canonical Scriptures supply, of the Gospel having effected an entrance into Spain, at this remote date, is found in the incidental observation of St. Paul addressed to the Romans, of which I have spoken before, that "whenever he took his journey into Spain he would come unto them;"[3] an observation which certainly implies, that the Apostle, at the time of making it, contemplated an expedition to

[1] Dialog. § 49.
[2] Acts viii. 12.
[3] See Chapter iii.

that country, and a visit to Rome by the way. The visit to Rome he undoubtedly paid, though not, perhaps, exactly under the circumstances he was supposing; and as he reached that capital, which he had always considered a stepping-stone to his ulterior object—for the Romans were to bring him on his way thither—it is only reasonable to suppose that he did not fall short of his original purpose, but carried it through, more especially as a void in his life would be in this manner supplied. The testimony of Clemens, that St. Paul "travelled to the limits of the setting sun,"[1] a testimony offered when he was himself at Rome, coincides with this supposition. Irenæus, who speaks of the identity of the faith of the Churches of Spain in his time with that of Christendom at large, corroborates such an interpretation of Clemens;[2] and Tertullian, in terms remarkably resembling those of Clemens, tells of "all the borders of Spain" having accepted the faith of Christ.[3]

Moreover, it has been argued that the Apostle probably would not visit Spain without touching on Gaul by the road; and that, accordingly, the Church of that country may be indebted to him for its foundation stone.

Doubtless the origin of the Church of Gaul is involved in great mystery, but, perhaps, some discordant elements in it would be reconciled by accepting the theory of a visit from St. Paul, or, if not from St. Paul, from some of his fellow-labourers, and supposing them to have broken the ground which the Asiatic mission of Pothinus and Irenæus occupied in the next century. For it is certainly singular, if we hold the Church of Gaul to have taken its primary origin from Pothinus and Asia Minor, and that part of Asia Minor too in which Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, presided as Bishop, that the time

[1] Ep. Clem. § 4.
[2] Iren. i. c. x. § 2.
[3] "Hispaniarum omnes termini."—Adv. Jud. § 7.

of keeping Easter, observed and enjoined in those quarters under Polycarp, and on the authority of St. John, should not have obtained in Gaul. It is obvious that Irenæus himself is personally under the influence which ran in the Asiatic channel. He describes his own recollections of Polycarp, and of Polycarp's conversation about St. John, with the deepest interest; and appeals to the traditions descending in that line, in opposition to the innovations of the Heretics.[1]

Moreover, it is on record, that Polycarp felt strongly on the question of the Quartodeciman manner of keeping Easter, though the fierceness of the controversy was reserved for the next generation. When he visited Rome, he would not be persuaded by Anicetus to adopt the Roman usage on this subject, though importuned to do so, on the ground that such usage had descended through the previous Bishops of Rome, from St. Peter and St. Paul, being determined, as he said, to abide by the example of St. John, which was on his own side;[2] and yet it should seem that the practice of the Church of Lyons was opposed to that of Polycarp; for, when Victor, Bishop of Rome, subsequently threatened to excommunicate the Churches that would not conform to Rome on this point, Irenæus addressed a letter to him, "in the name of the brethren of Gaul, over whom he presided," remonstrating, indeed, against his severity, but agreeing with him and the Church of Rome in the observance.

Might not, then, this anomaly be explained on the supposition that Pothinus and Irenæus found a Church already in existence at Lyons, and in its neighbourhood; a Church established through St. Paul or St. Paul's fellow-workers; and that, accordingly, the Asiatic missionaries were not disposed to disturb a usage already in possession?

[1] Irenæus, iii. c. 3, § 4; Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 20.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 24.

Perhaps this conjecture may be thought strengthened by the fact, for a fact it seems to be, that, after all, Gaul did not universally admit the Romish ritual in this particular. Bede, who gives clear evidence that the early British Church had much in common with that of Gaul, and was in close connection with it, mentions, amongst several points of discrepancy which existed nevertheless between that and the Roman, the rule for the celebration of Easter.[1] Mr. Bingham supposes Bede to be here under a mistake,[2] but this is scarcely probable; and the circumstance itself may, perhaps, like the former one, be explained by the double origin of the Gallic Church, its parents differing a little in their creed, or rather in their rubric; and, accordingly, as in private families, some of the children following the one parent and some the other. It would seem that similar anomalies existed for some time in England between the British Church, as planted from the beginning, and that of Rome as introduced by Augustin.

It may be observed in continuation of these speculations, that when the Church of Lyons, troubled by the heresies of Montanus and others in Phrygia (the vibrations of the latter reaching that Church, distant as it was), dispatched an Epistle to Asia, containing a manifesto of its own faith, which might serve to correct the aberrations of these sectaries, it at the same time sent another Epistle of the same kind to Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome, as if the Christians of Gaul had a peculiar interest in the Churches both of Rome and of Asia.[3]

The same inference may perhaps be drawn from the selection which Irenæus makes of the Apostolical Churches, as guardians of sound tradition; provoked to produce them in self-defence by heretics who were trou-

[1] Bede, Eccl. Hist. i. c. 27; ii. c. 2.

[2] Bingham, b. ix. p. 97.

[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 3.

bling the Church of the Rhone.[1] Though prepared to appeal to all, and, indeed, doing so from time to time,[2] it is to the Churches of Italy and of Asia that he draws attention pre-eminently; to Rome, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna; to the names of St. Peter and St. Paul, of St. John and St. Polycarp.[3]

In what I have been saying, I would not be understood to maintain that there was a Church completely organized and in order, in Gaul, before the arrival of Pothinus and Irenæus: perhaps there was not; and the expression of Sulpitius Severus, a Christian writer of the fifth century, himself of Gaul, so often quoted, that "the Gospel was received beyond the Alps somewhat late (serius)," ministers to that conclusion.[4] At the same time, Irenæus himself speaks of "Churches amongst the Celts;"[5] and speaks of them, too, as exhibiting the same form of faith as obtained elsewhere in all other Churches, implying that they were of a standing to contribute their testimony to the character of the traditional teaching of the Church universal; a mode of speech extremely difficult to reconcile with the supposition that Gaul owed the very origin of its conversion to Pothinus and himself. Moreover, Tertullian is in harmony with Irenæus on the subject of the Church of Gaul; his support the more valuable, because he uses terms of discrimination; "divers nations of Gaul," says he, "have believed in Christ."[6]

It is plain that evidence of this kind addresses itself to a date anterior—it may be, much anterior—to that of him who records it; and that, though Tertullian himself might be writing at the latter part of the second century, his testimony may be good for the first. No doubt it

[1] Irenæus, i. c. 1 § 7.
[2] Ibid. i. c. 10.
[3] Ibid. iii. c. 3.
[4] Sulpitius Severus, Hist. Sacr. ii. c. 33.
[5] Irenæus, i. c. 10, § 2.
[6] Tertullian, Adv. Judæos, § 7.

will in some degree be estimated according to the bias of the reader. Mr. Gibbon, whose aim it was to post-date the impression made on the world by the Gospel to a period when the secular power might be supposed to assist it, would narrow his range, and make Tertullian speak to times little antecedent to his own. Others, who think that they discern on all sides symptoms of the Gospel having crept through the various pores of the world that were open to it, with a surprising ductility from the very first; and perceive, for instance, St. Paul, wherever he touches in his travels, almost always encountering Christians, however made such, ready to meet him, would be disposed to expand his margin. All, however, I am contending for is, that Christian communities, created by some of those mysterious influences, the nature of which it is not possible always to determine, but which constitute a feature of the sub-apostolic age, existed in Gaul before the arrival of Pothinus and Irenæus; that these latter found the soil in some degree prepared for them; a certain cast already given to the religion of Gaul; which had its effect on their own subsequent proceedings, and served to temper usages indifferent in themselves, which an Asiatic teacher, had he been left to himself, would have been likely to prefer, and to give a slight bias to the Church of Gaul in the first instance, which it might never afterwards entirely lose. On the whole, having in this and a former chapter given some particulars of the progress which the Gospel made during the first century, and found that it had already penetrated the three quarters of the world, which was all that was then known of it, effecting a lodgment on all the shores of the Mediterranean, and thus securing to itself a basis from which it was impossible it should not advance on all sides, let us endeavour to follow its march, and to

trace the gradual flow of those waters which are destined eventually to cover the earth.

There is the more need to investigate this subject for ourselves, as the history of the diffusion of the Gospel over the world, which has long been in possession of the public, is calculated by the spirit, if not the letter of it, to mislead. The study of the early Fathers, whose works supply the true materials for such a history, had fallen into contempt in the days of Mr. Gibbon; and, however he might have acquired a partial knowledge of them himself, a knowledge, perhaps, too much limited to the Apologies, he must have felt himself writing for a generation which had long thrown such authorities aside, and under this impression he might be tempted to take liberties with his readers.

Accordingly, he finds an insidious pleasure, as I have already said, in post-dating the movements of the Gospel, willing to have it supposed that it owed its success to secular support, and that until Constantine declared in its favour it had made little way. This conclusion he more often insinuates than affirms—"a considerable portion of the globe," says he, "still retains the impression it received from the conversion of Constantine,"[1] "the foundation of Constantinople, and the establishment of the Christian religion, were the immediate and memorable consequences of this revolution;" *i. e.* the resignation and death of Licinius, and the elevation of Constantine to the Empire; or more obliquely, "the Christian religion is still professed by the nations of Europe after a revolution of *thirteen or fourteen* centuries."[2] Let us consider, then, whether we can acquiesce in this view of the position of Christianity, during the three centuries which preceded the reign of Constantine; and having already discovered

[1] Gibbon, ii. p. 258. | [2] Gibbon, ii. p. 259.

what that position was in the first of them, let us proceed to determine it for the other two.

Our means for doing this multiply as we move onwards; the authorities of the second century improving upon those of the previous one.

Of these, Justin Martyr is the earliest, a Gentile by birth, and a native of Samaria. He wrote his first Apology about one hundred and fifty years after Christ. Having made trial of the several sects of philosophy, and finding entire satisfaction in none, though least disappointed in the school of Plato, he was led to examine the sentiments of the Christians by an accidental encounter with one of that body, and became a convert himself. In his new character he fell into dispute with one Crescens, a Cynic, who had employed himself in railing against the followers of Jesus; and having made him his mortal enemy by an exposure of his ignorance, he was denounced by him as a Christian, and about the year 164 was put to death. His works, though disfigured by some inaccuracies, for which allowance, perhaps, has to be made from the circumstances of an unsettled life and the obstacles it presented in the way of exact composition, are on the whole of very great value; and being directed to the heathens at large, for so is the "Hortatory Address," the first of the kind since St. Paul's speeches in the Acts, with a view to their conversion; to the Jews, for so is the dialogue with Trypho, with a view to the same object with respect to them; and to the Emperors, for so are the two Apologies—the first to Antoninus Pius, the second to Marcus Antoninus, in mitigation of the severities exercised towards the Christians, by the State;—they shed very great light on the condition of the Church at that time, and supply a number of incidents by which we can measure its character, constitution, and,

what concerns us at present, the extent of territory which it occupied.

The conclusion to which the hints that fall from him under this head uniformly tend, is, that its circulation had already become very wide. The question is not, indeed, formally discussed, but whatever proceeds from his pen which can be referred to it, indicates the impression on his mind to be, that it had even now struck its roots very deep, and stretched out its boughs very far.

In commenting on the 17th verse of the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy, "his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people *from the ends of the earth:*"[1] he understands the horns of the unicorn to be emblematical of the Cross, which was to prick the heart of all nations from the world's end, "even," says he, "as it is now come to pass." Or, again, when expounding the 11th verse of the 1st chapter of Malachi, "My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and *in every place* incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts," he remarks, "that there is no nation whatever, whether barbarian, or Greek, or by whatever other name called, whether living in waggons, or altogether houseless, or feeding their herds, or dwelling in tents; amongst whom prayers and thanksgivings in the name of the crucified Jesus, are not made to the Father and Creator of all;"[2] terms which, however rhetorical, would have been simply ridiculous, had there not been some reasonable apology for their use. And, as the more oblique evidence of this nature is the better, it may be added, that a suspicion seems to have been entertained, even so early as Justin, whether real or feigned, that the Christians contemplated the establishment of an

[1] Justin Mart. Dial. § 91. | [2] Justin Mart. Dial. § 117.

earthly dominion, insomuch that he thinks it necessary to disabuse the Emperor Antoninus of such jealousy, by reminding him of the readiness with which the Christians confessed their faith in Christ, though perfectly aware that death would be the consequence, and the utter extinction of all worldly hopes.[1] Such jealousy, however, could never have possessed the minds of the dominant powers, unless they had perceived the Christians, as Pharaoh, who had similar qualms, perceived the Israelites, to be making a very extraordinary progress.

The inference is the same which would be drawn from a passage in Theophilus, a Bishop of Antioch, the sixth from the Apostles, and contemporary with Justin: "As in the ocean," says he, "there are certain islands, habitable, supplied with wholesome springs, fertile, provided with stations for shipping, and ports, so that those who are tossed by tempests may find a refuge in them; in like manner hath God assigned to a world battered by the billows and storms of sin, congregations, or, in other words, holy Churches, in which the doctrines of truth are kept safe, as are the vessels in these insular harbours, whither all who desire to be saved, who love the truth, and wish to escape the judgment of God, may repair:"[2] a mode of expression which it is difficult to believe would have been adopted by a writer, not particularly given to extravagant flights of fancy, had there not been some fair plea at least for the employment of it.

Irenæus, a native of Asia Minor, but eventually Bishop of Lyons, adds his testimony to that of Justin and Theophilus. He quotes disputations of a disciple of the Apostles;[3] he had communicated with those who had heard persons tell of having seen the Apostles;[4] he had even known Polycarp, and listened to him, as he in his

[1] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 11.
[2] Theophilus, ii. § 14.
[3] Irenæus, iv. c. 32, § 1.
[4] Ibid. c. 27, § 1.

turn related sayings and doings of St. John.[1] This latter had written his "Revelation" almost in his own age, at the end of the reign of Domitian, or about the year 96.[2] The evidence, therefore, of Irenæus, is that of one who flourished before the second century had come to a close, or more than a hundred years before Christianity had received any assistance or encouragement from the secular powers; and yet we may gather from him that it had spread itself very largely over the world when he wrote. And this testimony, it may be added, is that of a perfectly sober writer, whose subject, the Refutation of Heresy, did not direct his thoughts particularly to the extent of the Gospel's conquests, so that what escapes from him on this topic is incidental, and by consequence the more trustworthy.

In commenting, then, on the parable of the grain of mustard-seed, he speaks of the rapidity with which the Gospel grew after the burial of Jesus, as though the committal of his body to the ground furnished a pabulum for the vigorous expansion of the plant He was setting, so that it at once shot into a tree and "*stretched* forth its branches to the *ends of the earth*."[3] And in another place, when remarking upon the *uniformity* of the faith and doctrine of the Church, wherever established, he describes such uniformity as more clearly manifesting truth to be at the bottom of it, inasmuch as it prevailed "in spite of the Church being dispersed *all the world over*,"[4] the nature of his argument requiring that at least a very considerable force should be given to this phrase.

Tertullian, the next writer in chronological order from whom can be gathered any information with respect to the expansion of Christendom at this period, flourished during the latter part of the second and the beginning of

[1] Irenæus, iii. c. 3, § 4.
[2] Ibid. v. c. 30, § 3.
[3] Irenæus, Fragm. p. 347.
[4] Iren. i. c. 10, § 2.

the third century. In his tract "Ad Martyres,"[1] there is an allusion to the death of Peregrinus, of whom Lucian speaks, as an event which had happened "no long time ago," and this must probably have fallen out before A.D. 170. In his treatise "De Pallio,"[2] he talks of "*the triple* virtue of the present Government," meaning, it is supposed, that of Severus, Caracalla, and Geta. In his First Book against Marcion[3] he dates the speculations of that heretic at the 15th of Severus, which would answer to A.D. 208. In his Third Book against the same,[4] he makes mention of "a recent expedition to the east," which was probably that of Severus against the Parthians, a people to whom he also makes a passing allusion in the Apology,[5] the politics of the day suggesting them. In his treatise "De Monogamiâ,"[6] he says, one hundred and sixty years had elapsed since St. Paul used the expression "the time is short," and if we date the First Epistle to the Corinthians where it occurs at A.D. 57, Tertullian's treatise would have been composed in the year 217, or at the end of the reign of Caracalla. Having thus fixed the period within which this author wrote, to a sufficient degree of nicety, let us observe the language he uses on the subject of the contemporary diffusion of Christianity. In explanation, then, of such passages as that in the Psalms, "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession," he points to "*all nations* as escaping from human error and passing over to God the Creator and to God the Christ;" and to the fact of Christ "having already possessed the whole world with a faith in his Gospel."[7] He informs us

[1] Tertullian, Ad Martyr. § 4.
[2] Tertull. De Pallio, § 2.
[3] Tertull. Adv. Marcion, § 15.
[4] Ibid. iii. § 24.
[5] Tertull. Apol. § 37.
[6] Tertull. De Monog. § 3.
[7] Tertull. Adv. Marcion, iii. § 20.

that there was a cry abroad that "the State was besieged by Christians; that in the country, in the towns, in the islands, still there were Christians; that it was lamented as a misfortune that every sex, age, condition, rank, was passing over to that name;[1] that, though the Christians were so vast a multitude of men, almost the greater portion of every State, they nevertheless lived silently and modestly, known, perhaps, more as individuals than as a body;[2] that they were not, as the Moors, the Marcomans, or the Parthians, a people of one spot, but a people of the whole world; and, though but of yesterday, filled every place belonging to the powers of Rome—cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, their very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum, leaving them nothing but their temples; that if they counted the armies of Rome, their numbers in a single province were greater; that if so large a body of men as they were should break away from the Roman Empire, and repair to some remote corner of the globe, the loss of so many citizens would cover the kingdom with shame, would punish it by their very desertion of it; that it would tremble at its own desolation, at the universal silence, at the death-like stupor that would ensue; that it would have to seek whom to govern; that more enemies would remain to it than citizens; it having now the fewer enemies, inasmuch as almost all the citizens were Christians."[3]

Moreover, Tertullian, like Irenæus before him, does not confine himself to these general statements of the numerical force of the Christians, but descends to particulars, specifying the countries which they had actually penetrated, the catalogue of those countries being by this time considerably enlarged since that of Irenæus, and marking the progressive development of the Church's cause.

[1] Tertull. Apol. § 1.
[2] Tertull. Ad Scapulam, § 2.
[3] Tertullian, Apol. § 37.

Accordingly, when challenging the Jews to produce any one besides Jesus who had commanded the faith of mankind as the prophets foretold the future Messiah should do, he exclaims, "In whom, save in Christ, who is already come, have all the nations believed?" "The Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Armenia, in Phrygia, in Cappadocia, they who inhabit Pontus and Asia and Pamphylia, the inhabitants of Asia, and of the country of Africa about Cyrene, the Jews then in Jerusalem, and the rest of the people, as now the various tribes of the Getuli, and many districts of the Moors, the whole boundary of Spain, divers tribes of the Gauls, and those parts of Britain, which, though inaccessible to the Romans, are subject to Christ; and Sarmatians, and Dacians, and Germans, and Scythians, with many people besides, provinces and islands, many of them unknown to us and beyond our reckoning; in all which places the name of Christ, who is already come, reigns, as the Being to whom the gates of every city are open, against whom none are closed, before whom the locks of iron are broken in pieces, and the doors of brass unfold."[1]

Let it be granted that Tertullian deals to some extent in figures of speech and loose declamation, still nobody can dispute the sense, nay, the great abilities of this writer; and it would be an act of simple folly, calculated to defeat the end proposed, to represent the Christians in such terms as these, whilst it was notorious all the while that they were but a feeble folk.

I pass by Clemens Alexandrinus, as an author who does not happen to throw any light on our present inquiry, unless, indeed, his Pedagogue may be regarded as affording an index of the *intensity* with which Christianity had blended itself with the elements of society, wherever it had obtained a footing. For this Treatise, which

[1] Tertullian, Adv. Judæos.

succeeds the "Cohortatio ad Græcos"—a call on the heathen to turn to the Gospel—follows up the lead of the latter essay, and lays down a number of regulations for the direction of the new converts; regulations which bespeak that those converts must have consisted of all classes of society, and of all conditions in life; or, in other words, that the leaven of the Gospel must have pervaded most largely the mass of the people where it had lodged itself.

Proceed we to Minucius Felix, a Roman writer, who flourished soon after Tertullian, or at the beginning of the third century. The short work he has left us furnishes but a very slight contingent to the body of evidence we are now collecting; but he was a lawyer, as, indeed, in all probability, Tertullian had once been; and, perhaps, the word of a layman, and especially a layman of that profession, may be supposed to carry with it a more than ordinary weight. But whatever it may be, it is found on the side of those who maintain the ample diffusion of the Gospel in an age long before Constantine; for he puts into the mouth of Octavius, who, in an interesting dialogue, pleads the cause of Christianity against Cæcilius, the observation that the Christians, "though seeming to themselves to be many, were unwilling to pride themselves on their numbers, knowing that in the eye of God they were very few, the whole world being in God's sight but one household, whereas *they* had to distinguish it into people and nations,"[1] as though it was only when the Christians were compared with the inhabitants of the universe, that they could be accounted a small body.

Hippolytus, who follows next to Tertullian and Minucius in chronological order, taking up the evidence where they lay it down, still gives token of the regular flow of

[1] Minucius Felix, § 33.

the Gospel at the beginning of the third century, though in terms of the same general import. In his Treatise concerning Christ and Antichrist, when commenting on the clause of Jacob's prophecy, which says, "He shall wash his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of the grape," he exclaims, "In the blood of what grape, I pray you, but of his flesh, which hung like a bunch upon the tree; when from his side gushed two fountains of blood and water, whereby the nations are washed and purified: the nations with whom He is represented to encompass Himself as with a garment?"[1] whilst in another place, in a Treatise concerning the end of the world and Antichrist,[2] in language more to our purpose, because more pointed and precise, he says, "In those days shall the whole earth lament its miserable existence; the sea and the sky shall lament; the sun, the wild animals and the birds, mountains and hills, and the fruits of the field shall lament for the race of man, because all have turned away from God and put their trust in a deceiver, cleaving to a foul and inferior being, instead of the Saviour and the Cross of life. Then shall the Churches also lament with a great lamentation, because offering and incense and service is no more. Then shall the fabrics of the Churches be as a lodge in a garden, and the precious body and blood of Christ shall not be seen in those days. The Liturgy shall be extinguished. Psalmody shall cease. The reading of the Scriptures shall not be heard, but darkness shall be upon mankind, and mourning upon mourning;" a passage indicating so remarkable an occupation of the world by the Gospel at the time it was written, that a suspicion of even its genuineness might have suggested itself, founded on the advanced condition of the Church which it bespeaks—a suspicion which

[1] Hippolytus, De Christo et Antichristo, § 11.

[2] Hippolytus, De Christo et Antichristo, § 33, 34.

attaches more or less to several of the reputed works of this author, which stand in need of a judicious editor more, perhaps, than any of the early Fathers; but such suspicion may be thought to be removed, in this instance at least, by St. Jerome having quoted it with no misgivings; who thus sets to it the seal of one who was competent to judge, and who succeeded Hippolytus by no very long interval.[1]

After the lapse of some twenty years more, and about the middle of the third century, Origen presents himself as a witness to the march of the Gospel. Now, it is not to be denied that he says on one occasion, when an inquiry of Celsus sets him to contemplate the effects which would follow the conversion of the whole world to Christ, "We affirm that if even two of us agree touching anything on earth, and they ask it of their Father which is in heaven, it shall be given them; what, then, must we think would come to pass, if not *only a very few, as now*, agreed, but the whole Roman Empire?"[2] and Mr. Gibbon does not fail to avail himself of the paragraph[3] for purposes of his own.

It is to be observed, however, that in making this statement, Origen was pursuing a thought which the reference to the text in St. Matthew had prompted, of the efficacy of the earnest and harmonious prayer of even a very small number of persons, two or three; that, accordingly, he gave to his parallel a corresponding bias, and spoke in it of "a very few." For it cannot be disputed

[1] See Brogden, i. p. 425; Hieron. Com. in Dan. I observe Burton does not quote from this Treatise of Hippolytus, nor does Routh enumerate it amongst the works of Hippolytus, in his "Opuscula," ii. 42. Bunsen says it was soon "proved to be a forgery of the 4th or 5th century, and with the exception of Baronius no man of note was taken in by it." Hippolytus and his Age, ii. p. 272. But the Chevalier is apt to be ex-cathedral.

[2] Origen, Contra Cels. p. 424, Spencer's Ed.

[3] Gibbon, ii. p. 376.

that his language on this subject is calculated in other instances to produce a different impression, and lead us to think that the Christian doctrines had already become very prevalent, and the disciples very numerous. He asserts, and in the same Treatise which supplies the former quotation, that "the whole inhabited world sets forth the handiwork of Jesus; wherein are settled the Churches of God through Jesus, consisting of men converted from ten thousand crimes;"[1] that "all must be struck with wonder who revert to the time when Jesus taught and said, 'This Gospel shall be preached in *all the world* for a witness unto all nations,' and then perceive that according to this saying of his, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has actually been preached in all the world under heaven, to Greeks and Barbarians, to wise and foolish. For the word spoken with power has prevailed over the whole race of mankind, and one can find no nation among men which has escaped the doctrine of Jesus;"[2] that the powers of Jesus did not manifest themselves simply whilst He was in the flesh, but even then whilst Origen was writing, "insomuch that, according to Jesus' own foretelling, there were not workmen sufficient to get in the harvest of souls, so great was the crop of those who were then gathered into the garners of God, even the Churches;"[3] that "whilst it was in vain to look out for any considerable number of Greeks and Barbarians who confessed one of their own gods, Æsculapius, for instance, the Christians could clearly produce an unspeakable multitude of Greeks and Barbarians who confessed Jesus;"[4] that "the demons on earth, reputed to be gods by those who were uninstructed in their real nature, and the followers of those demons, were anxious to impede the dispersion of the doctrine of Jesus, perceiving

[1] Origen, Contra Cels. p. 53.
[2] Ibid. p. 68.
[3] Origen, Contra Cels. p. 33.
[4] Ibid. p. 124.

that the libations and odours, so pleasant to them, failed where the teaching of Jesus prevailed, wherefore, that God sent Jesus and brought to nought the whole council of those demons, and caused the Gospel of Jesus to obtain all *the world over*, to the conversion and correction of mankind, and made Churches spring up *everywhere*, which would oppose themselves to the assemblies of the superstitious, the libidinous, and the unjust; that these Christian congregations, when compared with the others, are as lights in the world, for that every one would acknowledge even the worst persons of the Christian Churches to be better than many of the members of the other assemblies; thus, that the Church at Athens is gentle and peaceable, as wishing to approve itself before God, whereas the assembly of the Athenians is factious, and by no means to be named with the other, and that the same may be said of the *Church* of Corinth as contrasted with the *assembly* of the Corinthians, and of the Church of Alexandria, with the assembly of that place; that if any candid person would well consider this, he would be struck with wonder that one should have been found to contrive and achieve the establishment of Christian Churches *in all parts*, Churches that should be coordinate with the *assemblies in every city;* that if the council of the Churches be viewed by the side of the council of each city, it would be perceived the councillors of the former were worthy of bearing rule in the city of God, if any such there be on earth; whereas, the councillors of the latter presented nothing in their manners to justify the superior position assigned them over that of other citizens; that if in like manner the ruler of the Church be viewed by the side of the ruler of the city, it would be discovered that even though he should prove to be one of the meaner sort, he would, on the whole, be making more progress in virtue than the coun-

cillor or ruler of the town;"[1] a passage surely intimating a very wide systematic dispersion of Christianity over the world, the organization of the Church regarded as presenting a parallel in its details to the organization of the State in every separate country. Origen further argues, that "whilst no philosophers or legislators had been able to produce any universal or large impression on mankind, or to draw within their system different nations, the whole of Greece, as well as that part of the world which is barbarian, presented myriads of men, who, having abandoned their native laws and reputed gods, had become zealous observers of the laws of Moses, and of the teaching of Jesus Christ—a reverence for the laws of Moses exposing them to hatred from the idolators; an acceptance of the doctrine of Christ, not only to hatred but to death."[2] And he repeatedly presses the inference, that the extraordinary manner in which the religion of Jesus had taken possession of the world, was the strongest proof of its divine character.[3]

Such is the language of Origen on this subject, an authority of the more value from the ambulatory life he appears to have led, and the consequent opportunities he must have had of estimating the progress of the Gospel by ocular inspection, for he wandered over many lands, he tells us, and gathered all the information he could, as he pursued his travels; a fact, it may be observed in passing, which supplies a key, perhaps, to the instances of haste and hurry, with which his writings abound.[4]

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, carries down the evidence to a somewhat later date still; he speaks, in one of his letters, of sacrifices which had been offered up, as though

[1] Origen, Contra Cels. p. 128; Spencer, iii. § 29, 30.

[2] Origen, De Principiis, b. iv. § 1, p. 156, Benedict. Ed.

[3] Origen, De Principiis, b. iv. § 2, Benedict. Ed.

[4] Origen, Contra Cels. vi. § 24.

called for by some extraordinary emergency, supposed to be a pestilence which occurred under Gallus and Volusianus, about the year 252;[1] and in another, from his place of retreat, not long before his martyrdom, of "the commands of the Emperors," in the plural, no doubt Valerianus and his son Gallienus, whom he associated with him, indicating a date of about the year 257. Here, therefore, we have a witness of the state of the Church during the middle of the third century. But the writings of Cyprian make it manifest, both by direct and incidental testimony, that the Gospel had by this time established itself on the most solid foundations over a very large part of the world. The intimate communication which is now perceived to be carried on amongst distant Churches; the connection subsisting between heathens and Christians in almost all the relations of life; and, above all, the range of discipline which now opens upon us throughout the universal Church, are all indirect manifestations of this fact. Thus, in illustration of the last head, in an Epistle to Antonianus, a Bishop of Numidia, on the subject of Novatianus, a schismatical pseudo-prelate, who was introducing much confusion into the Church, Cyprian says, "Whereas there is one Church of Christ divided throughout the world into many members, and one Episcopate, consisting of many concordant bishops, this man, when there is already a divine tradition, and a unity of the Catholic Church already knit together, and combined throughout all parts, would fain establish a mere human Church, and dispatch his own upstart Apostles amongst a multitude of cities, in order that he might lay the novel foundations of this institution of his own; and whereas, bishops, venerable from age, sound in faith, approved in trouble, proscribed in persecution, had been ordained through all the provinces and in every city, this

[1] Cyprian, Ep. 55, p. 82, Benedict. Ed.

man has the audacity to supersede them, and create other pseudo-bishops; as though he could either bring the whole world under his perverse innovation, or, by sowing his dissension, sever the joints of the ecclesiastical body;"[1] —an ecclesiastical body, as it elsewhere appears, so fitted together that the metropolitan communicated with every bishop of his province, and through him with all the members of that province,[2] summoned together Synods of Bishops for the purposes of conference and order—a body in which reproofs were administered by the Superior when the occasion called for them,[3] irregularities were repressed,[4] causes adjudicated.[5] Nor is it, as I have said, by these incidental notices only in the writings of Cyprian, that we detect the progress of the Christian cause, but there are direct references in them to the circumstances of the Church with which he was personally in connection, serving to create a presumption that light only is wanted in order to reveal to us a Christendom far more spacious than we are in a condition to affirm it to be by actual proofs; and to develope still further the sketch of some branches of the Primitive Church, which I have already drawn from hints that transpired in the works of the Christian Fathers of an earlier date than those we are now handling. Thus, the glimpses we have had already of the early conversion of Gaul, now become greatly enlarged, and the impressions to that effect conveyed by the remoter of the Fathers, are rendered far more vivid by the disclosures of Cyprian. Marcianus, a Bishop of Arles, had lapsed into the Novatian heresy, and, accordingly, Faustinus, a Bishop of Lyons, within whose province it should seem he lay, requests the interference of Stephanus, Bishop of Rome, with a view to effecting an inter-

[1] Cyprian, Ep. 52, pp. 73, 74.
[2] Ibid. Ep. 42, p. 56.
[3] Ibid. pp. 18. 97.
[4] Cypr. Ep. 42, pp. 19. 38. 112.
[5] Ibid. pp. 21, 22. 36. 39. 43. 47, 48. 56. 60. 329.

dict of all communion between him and other bishops; the Bishop of Rome naturally appealed to in the first instance, because Rome had been the head-quarters of Novatianus, who had been actually expelled from that Church. A similar appeal is made meanwhile by the same party, and on the same occasion, to Cyprian, who, accordingly, in his reply, furnishes us with the information of which I am now availing myself; the tendency of which is to show that the Gospel had, by this time, become stable in France, and the Church of that country fully organized. We were already in possession of the fact, through documents of a date long prior to Cyprian, of which I have made use in this history, that there was a Bishop of Lyons; it now appears that there was a Bishop of Arles, and not only so, but a number of bishops in the same quarter; Cyprian speaking of having been consulted, as he understood Stephanus, Bishop of Rome, to whom he is writing, had been, both by Faustinus, Bishop of Lyons, and by their other brother bishops in the same province;[1] and exhorting Stephanus to reply to them in a letter addressed to that province, and advise these brother bishops of theirs in Gaul not to allow this haughty Marcianus to insult their order (collegio) any longer: a view of the Church of Gaul perfectly in harmony with the aspect of it at a former date, and just what we might have anticipated from the promise it then afforded of its future development.

A similar incident, recorded by the same author, opens a similar enlarged prospect of the Church of Spain. Of the root Christianity had taken in that country, if not in the time of St. Paul, at least in the time of Irenæus, we have already spoken; and, accordingly, the plant being of God's planting, is found in the age of Cyprian to have cast its shadow far and wide. It appears that Basilides

[1] Cyprian, Ep. 67.

and Martialis, two bishops of the district of Leon and Asturia, had been deposed for misconduct; a degradation which they resented, and laid their wrongs, as they considered them, before Stephanus, Bishop of Rome. Meanwhile, the people of their dioceses dispatch a letter to Cyprian, by the hands of Felix and Sabinus, probably the two bishops who had been substituted for the others, begging his advice, and as it should seem, consulting him on the validity of those new consecrations; a letter which he submits to his brother bishops, and returns their common answer to it. It was to the effect, that the people of the dioceses of these offending bishops would have been partners in their guilt, had they forborne to testify against it; that in the appointment of bishops, "divine tradition and apostolical practice were to be carefully observed, and the rule kept which obtained in Africa, and in almost all the provinces, namely, that for a regular ordination all the nearest bishops of the same province should assemble together with the people for whom the bishop is to be ordained, and the bishop be chosen by the people present, who are fully acquainted with his life and conversation; that this rule had been observed in the ordination of Sabinus, inasmuch as the bishopric was conferred upon him by the suffrage of all the brethren and the judgment of the bishops, both those who were present in person, and those who had sent letters to Stephanus concerning him; and hands laid upon him in the room of Basilides;"[1]—the whole a proceeding which indicates very unequivocally the existence of a number of bishops and congregations of Christians in those parts, and in general the strong position which the Gospel occupied in Spain at that period, when a good portion of a century had to elapse before Constantine was destined to

[1] Cyprian, Ep. 68.

have any concern with it; and which indicates too, if compared with a former period, that the Gospel was then so triumphantly on the advance as to be sure of placing itself in a condition quite independent of the secular powers, whether favourably disposed towards it or otherwise, by the time of that Emperor. Nor are there wanting other substantial tokens of an organized Church, which present themselves at a period long before Constantine; tokens which still lead us to the conclusion that the Gospel did not owe to him or his encouragement its rapid growth and wide extension; but rather that the secular powers must by this time, of necessity, have had their attention turned to it; must have learned to own its influence, bow to its authority, and do it homage even in spite of themselves: such we may consider to be local councils, the existence of which in various parts of the world is recorded long before the Council of Nice, a date to which we are too much in the habit of referring the origin of such economy. But wherever such councils could be assembled, consisting as they did of bishops, and sometimes of bishops together with presbyters and deacons, we must necessarily believe that the country was largely occupied by Churches, and the position of the Gospel strong. Now, during the first half of the third century, we read of a council assembled in Asia Minor, probably in the neighbourhood of Smyrna, which called before it Noetus, a native of that place, with a view to suppress the Patripassian heresy, of which he was the propagator;[1] in the latter half of the same century was another council, in quite another district of Asia, Neocæsarea, in Pontus, held for the purpose of establishing canons relating to the participation in idol sacrifices and

[1] Routh, Reliq. Sacr. ii. pp. 374, 375.

other matters, which are still extant;[1] at about the same date was another council held at Antioch, having for its object to "express in writing the faith which had been received from the beginning, and which had been handed down as preserved in the Holy Catholic Church, by succession from the blessed Apostles, who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," against Paul of Samosata, who had been teaching the simple humanity of the Son.[2] On this occasion Hymenæus, Theophilus, Theotechnus, Maximus, Proculus, Bolanus—bishops—are all mentioned as taking part in the Epistle addressed to the delinquent; whilst on another, mention is made of a still larger muster, at the same place and for the same purpose, Firmilianus of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Gregory and Athenodorus, Bishops of Pontus, Helenus of Tarsus, Nicomas of a place in Iconium, Hymenæus of Jerusalem, Theotechnus of the neighbouring Cæsarea, Maximinus of Bostra, and a multitude of others, together with presbyters and deacons.[3] During the same interval, the latter part of the third century, councils were repeatedly held at Carthage, under Cyprian; councils which must have drawn together their recruits from all sides around that city. One council, to determine the question of admitting the lapsed, on their repentance, to the peace of the Church, at which no less than forty-two bishops, whose names are given, were present.[4] Another, shortly afterwards, on the subject of Infant Baptism, at which no less than sixty-six bishops assembled.[5] Another, in the year next to this, on the case of Basilides and Martialis, and on the manner of dealing with bishops who had procured for themselves licences to do sacrifice to idols; at which

[1] Routh, Reliq. Sacr. ii. p. 437.
[2] Ibid. p. 465.
[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vii. c. 28. 30.
[4] Cyprian, Ep. 54; Routh, Reliq. Sacr. iii. p. 69.
[5] Cyprian, Ep. 69; Routh, Reliq. Sacr. iii. p. 74.

thirty-seven bishops, whose names are recorded, were in attendance.[1] Another in the year following, on the validity of baptism administered by heretics and schismatics; a council of double value for the purpose we are using it, as it was not only itself composed of thirty-one bishops of the district of Carthage, whose names are noted down, but its judgment was addressed to eighteen bishops of Numidia, who were the parties that had laid their difficulties before the Council of Carthage; the whole incident serving to show not only the hold which the Gospel had now acquired on the region of Carthage, but on that of Numidia also.[2] And, lastly, the most distinguished of all the councils in this quarter of the world, indeed, one of the most remarkable perhaps of any before the Council of Nice, in which eighty-seven bishops of the province of Africa, of Numidia and Mauritania, whose names and dioceses are preserved, were convened—a council of such consideration as to be thought worthy of a review of it by Augustin, who was not satisfied with the conclusion at which it arrived.[3] We have here strong evidence of the flourishing condition of the Gospel, in a very large part of Africa, some time before the reign of Constantine; for these councils were all held under that of Gallus and Volusianus, or that of Æmilianus. Neither are those councils to be altogether thrown out of the account, which were indeed convened under Constantine, but still at dates anterior to the Council of Nice; for they bespeak the force of the Church at the opening of that reign, and display the vast resources it had provided for itself during the lapse of the preceding centuries. Such was the Council of Arles, in France, assembled in the year 314, at which two hundred bishops met together,

[1] Cyprian, Ep. 67, 68; Routh, Reliq. Sacr. iii. p. 77.

[2] Cyprian, Ep. 70; Routh, Reliq. Sacr. iii. p. 84.

[3] Cyprian; *vide* Routh, Reliq. Sacr. iii. pp. 91. 150.

from quarters the most remote—from the sees in Tripolis, Numidia, and Mauritania, to those of York, London, and Lincoln[1]—the subject of their conference being the schism of the Donatists, which, originating in Africa on the disputed election to a bishopric, spread almost throughout Christendom. Such was the Council of Rome, the year before on the same question; at which, however, only nineteen bishops appeared.[2] And such may also be considered the Council of Illiberis, in Spain, at which many canons on many questions of Church discipline were framed; for though, perhaps, later in date than the two last-named, it probably was earlier than the Council of Nice.[3]

Nor is this all: the progress of the Gospel a good deal resembles that of the Reformation. A political crisis might furnish in either case the moment for its breaking forth fully to the day, but the religious revolution had already been accomplished in the minds of men by the religious principle itself, and was only abiding its time for an ample development. The Reformation would have occurred, and in all probability would have occurred at about the same period it did, had there been no Elector of Saxony, and no Henry VIII. It existed substantially already, but required the countenance of the secular authorities in order to stand confessed. So was it with the conversion of the world to Christianity. Let us cast a glance at incidents left on record, characteristic of the state of the Christian religion in the world, when Constantine first declared himself its friend. We shall find them to be such as indicate that it was not his fostering hand which cherished it into life and action; on the contrary, that the days of its infancy had long ago passed, and that it had already attained to a commanding stature. No sooner is Maximinus removed and Constan-

[1] Routh. Reliq. Sacr. iv. pp. 80. 82.

[2] Routh. Reliq. Sacr. iv. p. 60.

[3] Ibid. i. p. 41.

tine in possession of the throne, though not in sole possession, being still embarrassed by his colleague Licinius, than without delay or progressive nurture, "the *renovation* of the Churches," we are told, "proceeded from the foundations;"[1] "the whole race of the haters of God vanished, and a day henceforth bright and clear and without a cloud to overshadow it, illuminated by its rays of heavenly light *the Churches of Christ throughout the world*."[2] "To those who fixed all their hopes on the Christ of God, there arose a cheerfulness not to be told, and a certain divine joy animated them; for they beheld every place which a little while before had been overthrown by the impiety of tyrants, revived as it were from a long and deadly plague; temples again raised from the ground to an immense height, and adorned with far greater splendour than those which had been formerly demolished."[3] "There ensued a spectacle to be courted and sought for by all, even the Feasts of Dedication throughout the cities, and the consecration of newly-built houses of prayer; synods of bishops; congresses of people from distant points; sympathy of nation with nation; the members of Christ meeting together in one harmonious whole; and agreeably to the prophetical saying which foretold the future in a mystery, 'bone was brought to bone, and joint to joint;'[4] and one power of the Divine Spirit pervaded all the members, and one soul was in all; and there was the same lively faith, and one hymn of praise to God from all. Moreover, there were the complete services of the hierarchy, and the ministrations of the consecrated, and the divine ordinances of the Church, on the one side exhibited in psalmody and in listening to the words delivered to men from God, on the other, in the celebration of the divine and mystical offices; and

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. ix. c. 11.
[2] Ibid. x. c. 1.
[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. x. c. 2.
[4] Ibid. c. 3.

there were the mysterious symbols of the All-saving Passion. And at the same time, every sex and every age, with all their heart and with souls rejoicing in the act, in prayers and thanksgivings praised God the Author of Good; and every one of the prelates who were present delivered panegyric sermons, according to his ability, sanctifying the assembly." The same author, Eusebius, who furnishes us with these traits of the position of Christianity at the very commencement of the reign of Constantine—a position in which it was found by him, and which was not created for it by him—proceeds to furnish us with a specimen of one of these sermons, addressed, as it should seem, by Eusebius himself to Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre, through whose agency the Church of Tyre, the most splendid of any in Phœnicia, had been erected; an oration which betrays, by many expressive touches of contemporary history, the flourishing circumstances of the Church even at that time, and the systematic polity it had everywhere assumed. Thus it accosts the priests who were present, as persons who wore "the sacred gown" (*τὸν ἅγιον ποδήρη*), the heavenly chaplet (*στέφανον*), who had partaken of the divine unction, and were enveloped in the priestly garment of the "Holy Spirit," as though a clerical dress was then prescriptive. It goes on to magnify the present glories of the Saviour—"Who of all kings," it asks, "was ever before so exalted as to fill the ears and mouths of *all the inhabitants* of the earth with his name? What prince after his death hath ever led armies, and planted trophies, and occupied *every place and country and city, Greek and Barbarian, with the consecrated furniture of his royal houses, and divine temples?*" as though the profession of Christianity had then extended itself in force over a large portion of the earth. It then pays a compliment to Paulinus, because when it was open to him "to go to

some other Church, there *being multitudes of Churches in the town*, thus abridging his toil, and saving himself from inconvenience, he had applied first of all to the work, himself; and then animating all the people by his own spirit, and collecting into one great whole, the body of them, he achieved the first of his labours,"[1] as though there was no lack of places for public worship, even then at Tyre at least, and if not at Tyre, why elsewhere? Indeed, that Churches actually did abound elsewhere, is certain, from direct historical evidence above suspicion. Eusebius, when speaking of the peaceful times which preceded the persecution of Diocletian, and the impulse which was accordingly given to the dispersion of the Gospel, exclaims, "How can any one describe those vast collections of men who assembled in the congregations, and the multitudes of those who met together in every city, and the famous troops of people who flocked to *the Houses of Prayer;* insomuch, that finding *the old buildings no longer sufficient*, they reared in all the cities, from the foundations, spacious churches?"[2] What might be the exact date of the earliest of these "old buildings," it may be impossible to say; but at any rate, it should seem, that structures, especially set apart for worship, existed in the latter part of the second century. "The zeal of faith," writes Tertullian, "might speak on this head all the day long, mourning that the Christian should come from the idols into the *Church*, from the worship of the enemy into the House of God"—"ingemens Christianum ab idolis in *ecclesiam* venire, de adversarii officinâ in domum Dei."—(De Idololat. § vii.) When, therefore, Cæcilius, in Minucius Felix, speaks of the Christians having "no temples," "templa nulla," he must be understood to mean that they had no temples accord-

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. x. c. 4. | [2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. viii. c. 1.

ing to the heathen meaning of the term, "nulla nota simulachra," no noted images, being the clause which immediately follows.[1] And the same observation applies to a similar reproach made by Celsus, in Origen.[2] Bede, deriving his authority apparently from Gildas, and describing incidents that occurred in Britain, as elsewhere, immediately after that persecution, but still before the favour of Constantine could have produced its effect, relates, that, "this hurricane at an end, the believers in Christ, who, during the danger, had hid themselves in woods and deserts and caves, again came forth, *repaired the Churches* which had been levelled with the earth, founded temples of the holy martyrs, completed them, perfected them, and established them in all quarters as ensigns of victory; celebrated festivals, and administered the sacred rights with clean hearts and lips."[3]

In the meanwhile, let us observe the leading features of this church at Tyre, as gathered from the Sermon of Eusebius, and ask whether, after contemplating them, we can come to any other conclusion than this: that the Christian cause which was prepared at once to furnish a church so ample in its dimensions, so organized in its parts, so rich in its decorations, could be in any other position than a most advanced one; whether it could stand in much need of secular help, and had to owe its success to the large accession of the help it was now about to receive. The passage itself, in which the details of the structure of this church are given, is the more worthy of attention, as being one of the very earliest descriptions we possess of a Christian church.

Its entrance was from the east, and led into a square court with covered cloisters on all sides, the rest open to

[1] Minucius Felix, § 10.

[2] Origen, Celsus, lib. viii. § 17; see Mr. Holden's Ed. of Minucius Felix, § 10, note 2.

[3] Bede, Eccl. Hist. i. c. 8.

the sky. In the middle of this court was a fountain of water for purification. Three doors on the western side of this court, the middle door of the three, high, wide, covered with plates of brass, and decorated with sculpture, conducted into the vestibule; the vestibule admitted to the nave, the proportions of which latter were ample, its roof lofty and covered with a coating of very precious cedar. Beyond this, in the chancel, were stalls for the bishops, and there were lower seats; in the midst of it the altar; and the whole parted off by a screen of elaborate workmanship in wood. Nor was the very floor neglected, but was adorned with a pavement of marble. On the outside of the nave were attached rooms and offices pertaining to the church, and opening into the nave, constructed with great architectural care.[1]

It is impossible that a place of worship on such a scale as this should have burst forth at once, simply on the Gospel being set free from persecution, had not a force accumulated with it, which could at once take advantage of the liberty granted, and assert itself beyond dispute or defeat. Thus it would seem, from a review of the details we have exhibited, that before the accession of Constantine, or at any rate before the favour he manifested for the Gospel could have produced any effect on the dispersion of it over the world, it had established itself in Spain, France, Britain, Germany, Scythia, Dacia, Sarmatia, Italy, Greece, the islands of the Mediterranean, the whole of Asia from the Ionian Sea to the Euxine, Palestine and the bordering countries eastward, Mesopotamia and the Elamites; the whole of the northern part of the continent of Africa stretching far inland—the testimony of one or other of the Fathers prior to Constantine bearing witness to these facts—its possession of these regions being no doubt, in some instances more, in

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. x. c. 4.

some less, complete; but the whole of them covering a surface which would bear no unfavourable comparison with that occupied by Christianity even at this moment, America being left out of the reckoning; and several of those regions even far more effectually occupied by it then, than at present.

CHAPTER XI.

Heathen Persecution first excited by Nero.—Renewed by Domitian.—St. John and the Grandchildren of St. Jude.—Condition of the Christians under Trajan.—Pliny's Letter.—Ignatius.—His Condemnation and Journey to Rome.—His Epistles.—Controversy respecting their Authenticity.—Bishop Pearson's Defence of them.—Syriac Manuscripts.—Examination of Archdeacon Churton's Arguments.—Martyrdom of Ignatius.

I HAVE said in a former chapter that the law passed under Nero, by which the profession of Christianity was made a capital offence, still continued on the statute-book under succeeding Emperors, probably till the time of Constantine: some modifications of it being introduced by one or other of the more humane princes, and the law itself often lying dormant for long intervals; always, however, capable of being put in force, and often actually put in force in one part of the empire or other, at the pleasure of an informer, a magistrate, or, most frequently of all, a mob. It will be now our business to take a rapid survey of the progress of the persecution of the Church through the first three centuries; this subject unhappily contributing a very main feature of the History of the Church during that period—a period which nevertheless witnessed, as we have already seen, the concurrent development of the Gospel throughout so large a portion of the known world.

The first distinguished victims of heathen persecution, as we have already said, were some of the Apostles themselves, St. Peter and St. Paul. They suffered at Rome,

to which locality the tyranny seems chiefly to have confined itself in act, as the motive for the exercise of that tyranny was local, though the scope of the law which sanctioned it might be universal.[1] For it does not appear to have been the doctrines or the practices of the Christians in the abstract which stimulated the secular power to annoy them, but the convenient scapegoat they afforded to bear away from the guilty party the obloquy of having set fire to Rome. So Tacitus represents the matter; who, though giving us to understand that the sect was certainly unpopular already—indeed, that unpopularity fitted them for the purpose—yet expressly ascribes the severities which Nero instituted against them to the cause I have said—his anxiety to transfer the infamy of the fire from himself to the Christians.[2] "A vast multitude" of victims perished on this occasion, and by modes of death which added insult to pain. They were dressed in the skins of wild beasts and hunted by dogs; they were crucified; they were cast to the flames; and when night came they were used to light up the streets and gardens. Their titles, however, though written in the book of life, are lost to the world, with the illustrious exceptions I have mentioned. Clemens Alexandrinus, to be sure, records a tradition of his own day, that the wife of St. Peter went before him to the death at this season, and that on seeing her led forth the Apostle expressed himself pleased that she had received the call, and was on her way home; and, addressing her by name, bid her be of good cheer, and remember the Lord.[3]

With the life of Nero ended the active persecution of the Christians for a time, to be next revived, about the year 95, by Domitian; himself, as Tertullian describes

[1] Tertullian, Apol. § 5.
[2] Tac. Annal. xv. § 44.
[3] Stromat. vii. p. 869, Potter's Ed.

him, a semi-Nero in cruelty;[1] but who, he adds, having some touch of a man in him, soon desisted from his undertaking, and even recalled the persons he had banished—a statement so temperate as to carry on the face of it the marks of truth, and satisfy the candid inquirer that when Tertullian ascribes to this Emperor the character of a persecutor of the Christians he does so in no spirit of exaggeration, and with no disposition to multiply, without a cause, the wrongs of the Christians.[2] Accordingly the particulars which have reached us of this persecution correspond with this announcement of it by the early Fathers; the paucity of them indicating that it could not have lasted very long; the nature of some of them that it could not be very intense. Flavius Clemens, consul of Rome, and cousin to the Emperor, is indeed the only person individually named as having been actually put to death.[3] At the same time, others are reported to have escaped it very narrowly. Flavia Domitilla, the niece of this same Flavius, was banished to the island of Pontia;[4] as was St. John to that of Patmos, having been previously plunged into a caldron of boiling oil, according to a history current in Tertullian's time, to which I have adverted already. Moreover the grandchildren of St. Jude (our Lord's brother) were summoned (as has been already noticed in this History) before the Emperor, in consequence of orders he had issued that the descendants of David should be slain; but as it appeared that they were only possessed of some four-and-twenty acres of land—land cultivated by their own hands, which were hard with toil, and had no expectation of sharing in any earthly sovereignty, their hopes fixed on the kingdom which

[1] Tertullian, Apol. § 5.

[2] See also Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 17.

[3] See Mosheim, De Rebus Christian. p. 110, on the authority of Eusebius, in Chronico.

[4] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 18.

Christ should establish when He came again in glory at the end of the world, to judge both the quick and the dead—they were contemptuously dismissed, and an end was put to the persecution.[1] It would seem, therefore, from these incidents, that the trouble, whatever it was, with which the Christians were now visited, reached to distant parts of the empire; for these grandchildren of St. Jude were, no doubt, resident in Judæa; and that it was prompted, not so much by the Emperor's horror of the character of the Christians, as by the suspicion which rankled in his breast, that, confounded as they were with the Jews, of whom the same had been predicted, they were destined to send forth a rival ruler of the world.

As the Christians had enjoyed an interval of repose between the reigns of Nero and Domitian, so did they again between those of Domitian and Trajan. But under the latter Emperor, humane as he was, and not accounted otherwise by the early Christian writers themselves, the sufferings of the Church were renewed, the field of them wide, the severity of them extreme. Meanwhile, we may trace in this alternation of storm and lull, God's providence fostering the cause He had in hand, which, under the influence of circumstances uniformly favouring it, might have suffered in simplicity, in integrity, in tenacity of hold, as it would certainly have lost an evidence of its sterling character which recommended it to so many; whilst, on the contrary, had the assault on it been both sharp and unremitting, it might, humanly speaking, have faltered under it, and not made a lodgment for itself on the earth without the utmost difficulty.

The condition of Christianity, however, under Trajan, I investigated some time ago, and endeavoured to show that Mosheim's views are incorrect, when he supposes

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 19, 20.

there were no laws against the Christians in existence on the accession of Trajan, founding that supposition chiefly on Pliny's celebrated Letter,[1] and that, accordingly, those of Gibbon, who follows him, are equally defective.[2] Pliny's Letter surely implies, not that there was no law against the Christians in existence when he was writing; on the contrary, that there was, only that he had not been in the way of seeing it administered; and that, finding the number of persons who fell under it so great, he was staggered about his duty, and would not proceed without express authority from the Emperor himself. Certainly the expressions of Tertullian, whose writings indicate a familiar acquaintance with the laws of Rome, are clear upon this point. In his book, Ad Nationes (c. 7), he distinctly affirms that, "whilst all the other edicts of Nero had been repealed, that against the Christians alone remained in force;" and in his Apology (c. 5), he speaks of Trajan "having partly frustrated the effect of the laws against the Christians, by forbidding inquiries to be made after them." On the whole, therefore, there can be little doubt that the Christians could be legally put to death, as such, under Trajan. He mitigated the execution of the law, in some degree, it is true, but in a manner which only serves to show that the law itself was popular, and that he would rather expose himself to the charge of personal inconsistency in the mode of maintaining it, than risk the public reproach of abrogating it altogether. Certainly, nothing could be more incongruous, as Tertullian remarks, than to condemn the Christians, and yet forbid search to be made for them—which was what Trajan did; to pronounce them guilty by the sentence, and yet innocent by the prohibition. Nor, as it should seem, could anything be more futile

[1] Mosheim, De Rebus Christian. p. 231.

[2] Mosheim, De Rebus Christian. p. 418.

than the protection which this prohibition afforded. The troubles of the Christians multiplied in his reign in spite of it. Informers were still not wanting. Too many parties were interested, from mercenary as well as other reasons, in the suppression of Christianity, to admit of it being otherwise. Persecution, we have seen, prevailed in Bithynia; in this instance, perhaps, instigated by the heathen priests, whose temples and altars were deserted; and by the tradesmen connected with those temples and altars, whose wares were offered for sale in vain, the shambles being full of victims for sacrifice, but scarcely a purchaser of them to be found.[1] Mr. Gibbon, it may be observed in passing, professes himself unable to discover any bigotry in the language or proceedings of Pliny on this occasion, in whose government these transactions occurred; and yet he put two female attendants of the Christians, probably deaconesses, to the torture, in order to ascertain the exact nature of their suspicious meetings. But the humanity of that historian, as Professor Porson remarks, is wont to slumber when it is only Christians who are at stake.[2] It might have been inferred from the distance of Bithynia from the seat of government, that a persecution which was raging there would not be confined to that province. Nor was it. Eusebius tells us that it was felt partially throughout every city (*κατὰ πόλεις*). Accordingly, Simeon, the son of Cleophas, the second bishop of Jerusalem, having sustained the rack many days with wonderful fortitude, was put to death by crucifixion at the age of a hundred and twenty, the character of Christian bringing him under the action of the law, though the real grievance appears to have been the political offence of being a descendant of David.[3] In the

[1] Pliny's Ep. x. 97.
[2] Letters to Travis, p. 28.
[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 32.

same reign, though probably at a later period of it,[1] Ignatius fell under the same calamity. The incidents attending his death proved the primary origin of a controversy in the Church on the subject of episcopacy, of such importance, that they deserve, and even require, to be detailed at greater length.

Ignatius, St. Chrysostom tells us, lived on familiar terms with the Apostles[2]—which is possible; for we learn from Eusebius that he was the second bishop of Antioch, Euodias being the first, whom he succeeded, probably about A.D. 70.[3] About the year 116,[4] he fell under Trajan's notice, as that Emperor passed through Antioch in his campaign against the Parthians.[5] By him he was condemned as a Christian to be devoured of wild beasts, and was accordingly despatched to Rome, where the sentence was to be put in execution. On his way he wrote certain letters, seven in number: four of them, those to the Ephesians, to the Magnesians, to the Trallians, and to the Romans, from Smyrna, where he touched, and had the opportunity of renewing his friendship with Polycarp, bishop of that place; the three remaining ones, those to the Smyrneans, to the Philadelphians, and to Polycarp, from Troas, which was the next step of his journey, and where he received tidings of the relaxation of the persecution at Antioch. It is these Letters which have furnished the subject of controversy to which I have alluded. The peculiar circumstances under which they were written, the greetings Ignatius was receiving on the road from the deputies of the Asiatic Churches, the anxiety he felt for the continued welfare of these Churches, and especially that of Antioch, from which he

[1] Pearson, Minor Theolog. Works, ii. pp. 304, 305.

[2] Homil. in Ignat. p. 6, Russell's Ed. of Ignat.

[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iii. c. 22.

[4] Bishop Pearson.

[5] Martyr. St. Ignat. § 11.

was removed—incidents of which his mind was full—naturally lead him to afford us much insight into the construction and constitution of the Churches of those days; information the more valuable because springing out of the occasion, and fortuitous. But as the evidence of these Letters is conclusive in favour of the three orders, there remained no alternative for those who disputed the apostolical institution of the three orders, but to deny the authority of the Letters. Bishop Pearson, one of the very greatest of our divines, undertook their defence, in a work which is one of the glories of our critical theology, the "Vindiciæ Ignatianæ." The plan of this work is, first, to produce the external arguments in support of them, consisting of testimonies reaching from the beginning of the second century, when they profess to be written, down to the fifteenth, at the end of which they were printed, century by century.

His witnesses of the *second* century are Polycarp and Irenæus. Polycarp, in his Epistle to the Philippians—an Epistle which expressly treats of Ignatius, and which he sends to them together with copies of the Epistles of that martyr just collected by him—uses a number of expressions coincident with those in the Epistles as we now have them, which cannot fail to plead most powerfully with every unprejudiced mind for their genuineness.

Irenæus actually quotes a passage from Ignatius' Epistle to the Romans, which passage is found in our present copies.

Origen is his witness of the *third* century, by whom two passages from the Epistles of Ignatius are quoted—one from that to the Romans, the other from that to the Ephesians, both of which passages are found in our copies of these Epistles. Moreover, it is remarkable, that whereas Daillé (the author to whom Pearson's Essay is a reply) had objected to these quotations that they are

preserved only in the Latin, and might, or might not, be Origen's, the original Greek of one of them, at least, has been since discovered by Grabius, and now stands amongst the fragments in the Benedictine edition of Origen's Works.

Eusebius and Chrysostom are the witnesses of the *fourth* century—both most important ones.

Eusebius, in the Third Book of his Ecclesiastical History, writes thus of Ignatius and his Epistles (c. 36):—

"Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostles, was at this time conspicuous in Asia, having been ordained to the bishopric of the Church of Smyrna by the eye-witnesses and ministers of the Lord. In his day also flourished Papias, he too a bishop, of the see of Hierapolis—a very eloquent man, and powerful in the Scriptures. And *he* also, who is still in the mouths of all, Ignatius, the second who received the bishopric of Antioch in the succession from Peter. His history is this. Being sent from Syria to Rome, he was devoured by wild beasts, a martyr for Christ; and as he made his journey through Asia, with a very vigilant escort to guard him, he still confirmed the sees at which he halted, city by city, by word and exhortation, entreating them especially, and above all things, to beware of heresies, then first springing up and coming to light; and begging of them to hold fast the *tradition of the Apostles*, which for security he thought it *needful now to commit to writing* as a *witness*. Accordingly, when he was at Smyrna, where was Polycarp, he wrote one Epistle to the Church at Ephesus, making mention of Onesimus their pastor. Another to the Church at Magnesia, on the Meander, wherein again he spoke of Damus their bishop. Another to the Church of Tralles, of which he names Polybius as at that time bishop. Besides these, he also wrote an Epistle to the Church at Rome, in which he exhorts them not to pray

against his martyrdom, lest they should deprive him of his earnest hope. The following are his very words:—'On my journey to Rome, I have to fight with beasts by land and sea, by night and day, being fastened to ten leopards (*i.e.* to a band of soldiers), whom kindness only renders more cruel. I am, however, only rendered the better disciple by their wrongs. Yet am I not thereby justified. I would that the wild beasts were ready for me. I pray that they may be found speedily. I will caress them that they may devour me the sooner, and not recoil from me through fear, as they have from others. But if they will not do it of good will, I will constrain them. Pardon me for this. I know what is profitable for me. Now do I begin to be a disciple. It is not for me to covet aught of things visible or invisible, if only I obtain Jesus Christ. The fire, and the Cross, and the rush of wild beasts, and the tearing asunder of the bones, and the fracture of limbs, and the grinding to powder of the whole body, let these, the devil's torments, come upon me, provided only I obtain Jesus Christ.' These things he wrote from Smyrna to the several Churches I have named. By-and-by, having left Smyrna, he again wrote from Troas to those at Philadelphia, and to the Church of Smyrna, and, individually to Polycarp, its chief pastor; and well knowing him to be an apostolical man, he commends to him, like a genuine and good shepherd, his flock at Antioch, beseeching him to take care of it with all diligence. And the same, writing to the people of Smyrna, uses expressions gathered from I know not where, speaking thus of Christ: 'But I know that He existed in the flesh after the Resurrection, and I am persuaded that He does exist in it; and when He came to those with Peter, He said to them, "Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal Spirit," and forthwith they touched Him and believed.'"

All this, Bishop Pearson thinks, is very strong testimony to the genuineness of the Epistles of Ignatius, as we have them.[1] Ignatius, according to Eusebius, wrote four of his Epistles from Smyrna—those to the Ephesians, the Magnesians, the Trallians, and the Romans. Accordingly it appears, from passages in these Epistles, *as we possess them*, that from Smyrna they were written. Again, according to Eusebius, he wrote three others from Troas —those to the Philadelphians, to the people of Smyrna, and to Polycarp. In like manner it appears from passages in these Epistles, *as we have them*, that from Troas they were written. Again, Ignatius, according to Eusebius, speaks to the Ephesians of Onesimus as their bishop; to the Magnesians, of Damas; to the Trallians, of Polybius. Now all these facts perfectly correspond with what we find in our Epistles. Again, Eusebius quotes a long passage, as from the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans; and another long passage, as from the Epistle of Ignatius to the people of Smyrna. The passages are found in our copies of those Epistles. It may be added, that in the report Eusebius makes of Ignatius' Epistle to the Romans, no mention occurs of any individual as at that time bishop of Rome, nor is there any mention of such an one in our copies of that Epistle. So that, on the whole, the Epistles of Ignatius which we possess are so manifestly those which Eusebius saw and described, that his testimony required to be set aside by some means or other; Daillé himself being reduced to the confession that the Epistles known to Eusebius were certainly the same as those we have. "Fatemur Eusebium illas Epistolas agnoscere, et pro verè Ignatianis habere; neque dissimulamus eas, de quibus ille verba facit, has ipsas fuisse videri, quæ his hodie nominibus circumferuntur, quales eas reverendissimus Usserius Latinè, eruditissimus Vossius Græcè

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. p. 8.

in libris, *ille* Anglicanis, *hic* Medicæis, ediderunt" (p. 8). Under these circumstances Daillé has recourse to the hypothesis that Eusebius himself was deceived in them—"a man," says Bishop Pearson in reply, "the most learned in ecclesiastical writings of any in his time."[1] Daillé will have it that these Epistles came out two hundred years after Ignatius; nay, that they were written when there was a rumour that Constantine or his father were about to become converts to Christianity. Now Eusebius must have been then forty years of age. Must we not imagine that when he lighted upon the manuscript of these Epistles he started at the first glimpse! Epistles which he had never discovered either in the library of Pamphilus at Cæsarea, or of Alexander at Jerusalem, and the existence of which he had never heard of up to that time! Surely he, a man of forty, would know well enough what age a book savoured of, and in how many ways its novelty would be betrayed; more especially when he came to examine the Epistles as carefully as he did; when he noted in them the names of particular bishops, the incidents of the journey referred to in them, the tradition of apostolical doctrines, the reputation of divers heresies; and when he actually made extracts from them, using more diligence in his examination of this author than of any other. Is it to be believed that if he had found in them the anachronisms Daillé pretends to have done; the inconsistencies with apostolic language, the offences against modesty, sound doctrine, truth, prudence—so abhorrent from a martyr; such absurdities, conceits, puerilities, as are alleged, he could have ever accepted these Letters as the work of Ignatius, and consecrated them to posterity? —*Credat Judæus.* "I contend," continues Bishop Pearson, "that Eusebius used such diligence and such judgment in examining the writings of the primitive Chris-

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. p. 120, et seq.

tians in which he thought apostolical traditions might be contained, that no one ever afterwards doubted his fidelity, or the writings which he pronounced genuine. The books which are now questioned, or which ever have been questioned, have not his testimony to their truth. Show me a lapse in any other work of Eusebius, before I can believe it of this."[1]

The other testimony of the *fourth* century produced by Bishop Pearson, is Chrysostom. The passage occurs in an Oration or Homily upon the Martyrdom of Ignatius, pronounced by him at Antioch on the anniversary of that event. It is as follows:—"When he heard that this manner of punishment awaited him, 'Would I might enjoy,' said he, 'those wild beasts, for so do lovers suffer with satisfaction anything for those they love,'" *ἐγὼ τῶν θηρίων ἐκείνων ὀναίμην, ἔλεγε.* Now this very sentiment, in as nearly the same words as possible, is found in Ignatius' Epistle to the Romans, as we have it, *ὀναίμην τῶν θηρίων τῶν ἐμοὶ ἡτοιμασμένων.* But Daillé would have it believed that it was first uttered aloud by Ignatius when at Rome, at the time he suffered; and that, having been put upon record in the History or "Acts" of his Martyrdom, it was appropriated out of that document by Chrysostom, and not out of the Epistle. To which Bishop Pearson replies, that the *genuine* "Acts" did not contain the sentiment, but those "Acts" only which were of a later date than Chrysostom, and were, in fact, compiled out of the Epistles themselves. But, besides all this, the latter part of the clause in Chrysostom, which says that "lovers suffer with satisfaction anything for those whom they love," evidently contains an allusion to another passage in the same Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, "my love hath been crucified," *ὁ ἐμὸς ἔρως ἐσταύρωται.* These, however, are by no means the only

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. p. 123.

passages in the Epistles of Ignatius to which Chrysostom may be considered to allude. So that if, by any violence of criticism, the impugners of the Letters could destroy the effect of these palpable quotations—for such they seem—would they, even then, have disposed of the argument from St. Chrysostom? On the contrary, this Homily abounds in verbal resemblances to short phrases in the Epistles, as now extant, far too close to be accidental, but which it would be out of place to bring forward here in detail.

I will not pursue the *external* testimony to the genuineness of these Epistles further, through the subsequent succession of centuries, over which Bishop Pearson carries it; but turn for a moment longer to the *internal* evidence for the same, which constitutes the second part of Bishop Pearson's great work.

To this, however, it is much more difficult to do justice without entering into it more largely than my limits permit; for it is full to overflowing of the most masterly arguments on a variety of topics, which bear more or less on the question, and display the vast magazine of scholarship, and the perfect command over it, possessed by this distinguished divine.

In general, then, Bishop Pearson contends, that the Epistles, according to our own copies, savour throughout of the times of the real Ignatius, *i. e.* the beginning of the second century, and that there is nothing in them relating to heresies newly appearing, or to the manners and institutions of the Primitive Christians, or to the rites established after the age of Ignatius, or to usages ecclesiastical, which betrays a later origin.

[1] Thus the order of Bishops is distinctly asserted as superior to the other two orders, but no extravagant honours or faculties are assigned to them; none of those

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 5.

titles of dignity which became so common afterwards; no mention of καθέδραι, or ecclesiastical splendour of any kind; no one episcopal seat represented as having a prerogative over others; no obedience beyond that which was necessary for the prevention of schism and promotion of unity; no depression of the order below them, the *Presbyters;* on the contrary, though a distinct order, described as next and near to them, θεοπρεπέστατον et ἀξιονόμαστον, et τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄξιον πρεσβυτέριον, and the like phrases occurring frequently. The same may be observed with respect to the *Deacons.* In these Epistles they are addressed by the bishops with singular affection and friendship;[1] but by the end of the third, or beginning of the fourth century (the date of the Epistles, according to Daillé), the deacons had become of comparatively little account.

[2] Again, the *simple* nature of the heresies attacked in these Epistles, argues them to have been written before those divisions had multiplied. There were two heresies which *prevailed* in the first century; either of them opposed to the other: that of the *Docetæ*, set on foot by Simon, which went to subvert the humanity of Christ; and that of the *Ebionites*, which went to destroy his divinity. Of the former, Jerome says, "that even whilst the Apostles were living, and the blood of Christ had been recently shed in Judæa, his body was asserted to be a phantom." Of the other he says, "that John the Apostle, the last of the Evangelists, was requested by the Bishops of Asia to write his gospel against Cerinthus and other heretics, and the dogmas of the Ebionites, who maintain that Christ did not exist before Mary."[3] The first of these heresies, that of the Docetæ, Ignatius refutes

[1] Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 220. Σύνδουλοί μου, Philadelph. § 4. Οἱ ἐμοὶ γλυκύτατοι, Magnes. § 6.

[2] Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 6.

[3] Ibid. p. 7.

in his Epistles to the people of Smyrna and of Tralles; the other, that of the Ebionites, in his Epistles to Polycarp, the Ephesians, the Magnesians, and the Philadelphians. No *other heresy does he touch besides these two;* and whatever he says of any heretical doctrine may be referred to one or other of these.

[1] Furthermore, the writer of these Epistles speaks of spiritual gifts as then prevailing in the Church; lays claim to occasional communications of the Spirit, which later writers do not; seldom quotes the Gospels, but often alludes to the Epistles of St. Paul, which were recognised in the Churches much sooner than the Gospels, and of which there were not the same number of counterparts.

Neither, again, is there that savour of *Gentile* learning in them, which discovers itself in writers after him; but rather a simple, earnest manner, and a soul panting for martyrdom.

[2] Bishop Pearson now produces numerous instances of spurious works betraying themselves by some inadvertent step in the chronology, and argues that the Epistles of Ignatius would have been betrayed in this manner, had they been other than genuine. He contends that in these Epistles of Ignatius, according to our shorter copies of them, there is nothing to lead us to believe that they were written after the *tenth year of Trajan;* whereas the longer or interpolated Epistles (a fact which strengthens the argument) present many violations of date, of the ways of Ignatius, and of his language.[3] And it is to *these* inconsistencies that Daillé draws our attention in many of his strictures, though the passages on which he founds them are noted in red ink, as interpolations, according to his manuscript. Thus he alleges that the author of these

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 8.

[2] Ibid. p. 9.

[3] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. pp. 14, 15.

Epistles, in the Epistle to the people of Tralles (§ xi.), speaks of Basilides, Theodotus, and Cleobulus; and yet that these heretics did not flourish till after the *martyrdom* of Ignatius. But the truth is, that none of these names appear in the shorter, but all of them in the interpolated or larger Epistle, and in that only; and if Daillé further contends, as he does, that, apart from the name (as of Theodotus, for instance), the substance of the argument in the Epistle proves that its author must have been acquainted with the heresy of which, at any rate, Theodotus was the propagator, and therefore betrays that he lived after Theodotus, Bishop Pearson replies, that the heresy of Theodotus was, in the main, the same as the heresy of Ebion, which was of a date quite early enough to have fallen under the animadversion of the genuine Ignatius.[1]

A similar objection taken by Daillé to the notice of the other heresy, that which held the body of Jesus to be unreal, which occurs in the Epistles of Ignatius (as in that to the people of Smyrna, § ii.), meets with a similar answer from Bishop Pearson.

Daillé ascribes that dogma to Saturninus, who lived after the true Ignatius; but the heresy itself, says Pearson,[2] was older than Saturninus, having been disseminated by Menander, from whom indeed Saturninus received it; and even by Simon before him; so that the mention of the heresy did not necessarily imply that the writer of the Epistles lived after Saturninus.

But Daillé has yet a more formidable objection of the same kind to produce.[3] In the shorter or uninterpolated Letter to the Magnesians (§ viii.), is the following phrase:—"There is one God who hath manifested Him-

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 22.

[2] Ibid. p. 24.

[3] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 26.

self by Jesus Christ, his Son, who is his eternal Word, not proceeding from *Silence*," οὐκ ἀπὸ Σιγῆς προελθών. In the corresponding place in the *interpolated* Epistle the passage runs thus:—"Who is his Word, not *effable*, but substantial, for He is not the voice of articulate speech, but the generated substance of the Divine energy," where, it is to be observed, an allusion to the procession of the Word from *Silence* is suppressed. Daillé maintains that the interpolator had his reason for making this change: that being anxious to save the credit of the pretended Ignatius, and aware that his expression of the "Word proceeding from Silence" belonged to the school of Valentinus, who was later than Ignatius, he gave a different turn to the sentence. This flimsy hypothesis of Daillé, that the interpolator did his work upon these Epistles on the principle of concealing those flaws in the originals which would have proved them spurious, draws from Bishop Pearson his own avowal of the utter absence of all plan or purpose in the nature of the interpolations,[1] proofs of which he gives; and accordingly he laughs to scorn the notion that the interpolator should have busied himself about covering the nakedness of the pseudo-Ignatius, or should have suppressed all mention of the phrase "the Word proceeding out of Silence" (an error reproved in the Epistle to the Magnesians), because the error itself savoured of Valentinus, who lived after Ignatius, and so any allusion to such a heresy would have been an anachronism.

With respect to the argument itself on the Σιγή, or procession of the Word from *Silence*, a dogma, as I have said, condemned in the Epistle to the Magnesians, Bishop Pearson contends,[2] first, that it has no special relation to the heresy of Valentinus, but is levelled exclusively against

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 27.

[2] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 33.

the *Ebionites*, in which there would be no anachronism; that the paragraph immediately preceding the phrase in question clearly relates to the Ebionites, and also the one immediately succeeding (§ ix.); that, therefore, the passage in dispute must relate to the Ebionites also; that the expression οὐκ ἀπὸ Σιγῆς προελθὼν, as applied to the Word, was simply intended to be opposed to the notion that there was a time when the Word did not exist (which was what the Ebionites taught), and had no deeper meaning; the term *Silence* simply suggested by the term *Word*, since the utterance of a word breaks a silence, and cannot exist so long as there is silence; and, on the whole, that the phrase οὐκ ἀπὸ Σιγῆς προελθὼν is merely a sequel to the phrase λόγος ἀΐδιος, which went before it—both the one and the other spoken of the Son of God. Moreover, that had the writer of the Epistle been contemplating the heresy of Valentinus when he penned the passage in question, he would not have used the expression ἀπὸ Σιγῆς προελθὼν, but ἐκ Σιγῆς προβεβλημένος, προβεβλῆσθαι, and not προελθεῖν, being the technical term of the Valentinians, and προβολαὶ the projection of their Æons.

Pearson argues, secondly, that Valentinus and his followers did not, in fact, hold the doctrine that the Word proceeded from *Silence*;[1] but this they held, that Νοῦς was projected from Bythus and Silence, and therefore that he knew Bythus, and was equal to him; but that Bythus and Silence refused to generate any more Æons, and, therefore, that Νοῦς was called their only-begotten. However, in order that other Æons might be projected, Νοῦς was made Ἀρχὴ and the Father, and from him proceeded the Word, who, not being of Bythus and Silence, was inferior to Bythus, and knew him not, and was called a blind Æon. From all which it appears that, according

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 45.

to the school of Valentinus, the Word cannot be said to come of Bythus or Silence.

This part of Bishop Pearson's argument, I may observe, though very good in itself, will be scarcely intelligible to those who have not made themselves acquainted with Irenæus, who is chiefly occupied in stating and refuting these notions of Valentinus and of his school.

But Bishop Pearson shows, thirdly, that these heretical opinions of Valentinus were not original in him; but that he had revived those which had lain dormant, and which might, very possibly, therefore, be known to Ignatius, being, in fact, the opinions of the ancient Gnostics.

[1] And fourthly, to make his argument quite triumphant, Pearson demonstrates that it was extremely probable Valentinus put forth his doctrine at such a period as was actually consistent with Ignatius having a knowledge of it before he wrote his Letters.

Hitherto we have found Daillé seeking for anachronisms among the *heresies* mentioned in these Epistles. He does not confine his argument, however, to these.[2]

First, the following passage occurs in the Epistle to the people of Smyrna (§ vi.): "Let no man deceive himself; both things in heaven, and the glorious angels, and rulers (ἄρχοντες), visible and invisible, unless they believe in the blood of Christ, are under condemnation." There is an allusion, according to Daillé, in these "rulers visible," to Constantius, or his son Constantine, of whose conversion there might be some expectation.[3] Now, Constantius was not Emperor till A.D. 304, nor Constantine till A.D. 306. "But," replies Pearson, "surely ἄρχοντες may mean any magistrates whatever, even ecclesiastical authorities,

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 74.

[2] Ibid. p. 89.

[3] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 90.

and there is no need whatever to construe it of Constantine." Again, in the Epistle to the Romans, it is said of Ignatius, that he "is bound to ten *leopards*" (§ v.), a company of soldiers being meant by that term. Now Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, incidentally objects to the authority of these Epistles, on the ground that *leopardus* was not a word in use till the time of Constantine; and Daillé adopts his objection without acknowledgment.[1] But Pearson shows the contrary: *camelopardus* being used by Pliny and Varro; and he brings passages from authors anterior to Constantine, who employ the term *leopardus* itself; or contemporary with Constantine, whose use of it marks it to have been then familiar.

Another fact on which Daillé builds an argument is, that Ignatius quotes writings which are apocryphal; a proceeding disrespectful, he conceives, to Scripture; as in the following passage (Ep. Ad Smyrnæos, § iii.):—"And when he came to those about Peter, he said unto them, Hold me, handle me, and see that I am not an unembodied spirit." "Now, these words," says Daillé, "he had from the Hebrew Gospel, which is apocryphal." "Perhaps so," replies Pearson, "but Eusebius, Jerome, and Theodoret have all noticed these words of Ignatius, without considering that any slight was passed upon Scripture by them; or suspecting that they were unworthy of the martyr. Nay, in another place, Jerome not only refers to a paragraph in this Gospel according to the Hebrews, which Ignatius had quoted, but sanctions his application of it, by adding, that if you did not use such testimonies for *authority*, you might use them for their *antiquity*, and as an evidence of the opinion of the Church.

"Besides," continues Pearson, "there are many sayings attributed to our Lord in the early Fathers, which are not now found in Scripture, but seem to be merely *tra-*

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 91.

ditional; and accordingly, Grabius adduces this very argument in support of the antiquity and truth of the Epistle of Clemens, that he quotes maxims as Christ's own, not now found in Scripture, as though they were sayings of his still held in remembrance; and why may not Ignatius," adds Pearson, "who conversed with the Apostles and their disciples, do the same, particularly when he had not access to the Scriptures by reason of his bonds?"

Again,[1] Daillé objects to the author of the Epistles the extraordinary desire he evinced for martyrdom, insomuch that he would not permit his friends at Rome (Ep. ad Rom. § iv.) to pray for his deliverance, considering this a feeling unbecoming Ignatius. "What then?" says Pearson; "would you have an eminent champion of the Christians, when led away to death, beseech the people to intercede with God and man for him that he might be spared? Where will you find an example of this in the history of the old persecutions? 'The cry of the martyr is this,' saith Augustine on the 63rd Psalm, 'Save my life from the *fear* of the enemy,' *i. e.* I pray not that the enemy may not slay me, but that I may not fear him if he does. Moreover," proceeds Pearson, "when St. Paul foresaw the bonds that awaited him, and when he was, as yet, with his friends, he reproves them when they would have hindered him from going up to Jerusalem, and asks them, 'What mean ye to weep and break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem,' &c. And again our Lord Himself, when hastening to his end, rebuked Peter for saying, 'Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee,' with a 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'" And then Pearson subjoins many examples of the early martyrs courting their death, and remarks on the effect it had in converting the

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 105.

spectators of such firmness to a faith which wrought it;[1]—the case of Celerinus the Confessor, who says to Lucian the Confessor, in the Epistles of Cyprian (Ep. xxi.), "Pray that I, too, may be worthy to be crowned with your company"—Pete ut sim dignus et ego coronari cum numero vestro;[2]—the case of Polycarp, who says to the Proconsul, when he was threatening him now with the wild beasts, and now with the fire, "Wherefore do you tarry? bring what you list"—*ἀλλὰ τί βραδυνεῖς; φέρε ὃ βούλει;*[3]—the case of Phocas, who entertained the lictors in his house, though they told him that they were sent to put Phocas to death, and promised that on the morrow he would show them Phocas; and when a grave had been prepared, he stood before them, and said, "I am Phocas;" and when they hesitated, he gave them courage to slay him by his own exhortations, and his head being severed from his body, he was offered up an acceptable sacrifice to God.[4]

Daillé finds another argument against the genuineness of the Epistles, in an expression which occurs in the Epistle to the Ephesians (§ xii.) respecting St. Paul, of whom it is said, *ὃς ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ μνημονεύει ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, which, it would seem, Daillé interpreted (for he does not himself speak it out), "who makes mention of you in Christ Jesus in all his Epistles," an assertion, says he, contrary to the fact. "But," replies Pearson, who defends his rendering of the Greek by quotations from Clemens Alexandrinus, and from other writers, "the true construction is, 'in his whole Epistle,' *i. e.* throughout this Epistle to the *Ephesians*, an assertion in accordance with the fact;" which Pearson then goes on to prove by a brief analysis of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, and

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 106.
[2] Ibid. p. 107.
[3] Acts of Polycarp, § 11.
[4] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 113.

a comparison of it with some other of his Epistles—one of those many incidental episodes (so to say) with which this work abounds, and which argue the fulness of Pearson's own mind, and the ripeness of his knowledge. "The martyr's words," proceeds he, "are here not used loosely and frigidly, but with exactness and deliberation. For the *whole Epistle* to the Ephesians especially looks to the Ephesians themselves, to a respect and care for them, and transmits a most honourable memory of them to posterity. In other Epistles, the Apostle often sharply reproves those to whom he writes, or at least commends them sparingly or not at all; or else he disputes with a good deal of latitude on things pertaining to his faith, or on questions that require decision. But here he constantly applies himself by every means to the *Ephesians*, and treats them as excellent Christians, as firm believers in the Gospel of Salvation, as sealed by the spirit of promise, as fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God. He often ardently prays for them, exhorts them, adjures them, commends them, diligently instructs all ages and both sexes amongst them, and everywhere betrays his singular affection for them. 'It was with all his heart,' says Chrysostom, 'that Paul wrote to them,' Πολλῆς ἔδει τῷ Παύλῳ σπουδῆς πρὸς ἐκείνους γράφοντι; 'and he is reputed to have imparted to them his deeper thoughts, as the persons whom he had already taught,' λέγεται δὲ καὶ βαθύτερα τῶν νοημάτων αὐτοῖς ἐμπιστεῦσαι ἅτε ἤδη κατηχημένοις; with them he left Timothy, so that Ignatius calls them Παύλου συμμύστας (§ xii.) as being persons to whom he had communicated the *whole counsel* of God. Origen remarks (Homil. 15) a great difference between the Corinthians and the Ephesians: 'See how Paul speaks to the Corinthians, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able;" and

accordingly, because they still stood in need of milk, they were only taught such things as children might learn: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife," &c.; "eat not things offered to idols;" all such doctrine is the milk of babes—of infants in Christ. But when St. Paul writes to the *Ephesians* he gives them solid meat. To the Ephesians there is no talk of fornication, nor of idolatry, nor of meats offered to idols.'"

Such is the masterly disquisition on the character of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, into which Bishop Pearson is betrayed, whilst confirming the justice of the observation of Ignatius that Paul makes mention of them in Jesus Christ in the *whole of that Epistle*, ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ, and his own correctness in rendering it as he does. I have given this passage in the Vindiciæ Ignatianæ a prominence rather out of proportion to the general aspect of this abridgment of the work, both because it furnishes so good an example of the affluence of this great theologian, and because it brings before my readers the light in which he contemplates a very leading Epistle of St. Paul.

[1] Another objection Daillé discovers, in the author of the Epistles pretending that he had *seen* Christ after his resurrection. So he translates Ἐγὼ γὰρ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐν σαρκὶ αὐτὸν οἶδα καὶ πιστεύω ὄντα (Smyrn. § iii.), for such he shows to be the true reading of the passage. "Now," says Pearson, "οἶδα is one thing, εἶδον another. 'I *know*,' is the construction of the phrase, and not 'I saw.' 'I know that he existed in the flesh even after his Resurrection, and I believe that he yet exists in it.'" But, argues Daillé, Jerome translates it as though εἶδον had been the reading. "True," says Pearson, "but Jerome was a *careless* translator, even on his own confession," and then he gives many instances of his negligence in these very Epistles. Still, contends Daillé,

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 120.

the sense Jerome assigns to the word is the true sense, for there was a report that Ignatius had seen Christ, and whence could it be derived but from this passage in the Epistle? Pearson rejoins, that the report was of a nature which did not apply to the passage in question. The passage is, that Ignatius saw Christ in the flesh after his Resurrection; the report is, that Ignatius was one of the little children whom the Disciples would not suffer to come unto Christ, but whom He took up in his arms; and Pearson considers the fable to have been founded on the surname given to Ignatius, Θεοφόρος, a surname which was far older than the legend, the legend itself not being to be traced beyond Anastasius the Librarian, who lived about the end of the ninth century.[1] [2] But there is another objection to the genuineness of these Epistles advanced by Daillé, which he calls his *Palmary* one, and considers the weightiest of all, viz. that the *Apostles* made no distinction between bishops and presbyters, nor yet the *immediate followers* of the Apostles, *i. e.* for the first two centuries no such distinction subsisted; it began, he contends, in the third; therefore, the Epistles which profess to date in the beginning of the second century, and yet affirm this distinction, cannot be genuine.

Pearson, however, maintains that the distinction is found in the writings of the second century. In the *Acts of Ignatius*, for instance, where it is said, that on "landing at Smyrna, Ignatius hastened to the house of Polycarp, the *Bishop*, his fellow-disciple;"[3] and again, that "the cities and Churches of Asia welcomed the Saint through their *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*."—(*Ibid.*) And again, in the letter of Adrian to the Consul Servianus: "Illi qui Serapin colunt, Christiani sunt, et devoti

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 148, c. xii.

[2] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 156.

[3] Martyr. St. Ignat. § 3.

sunt Serapi, qui se Christi Episcopos dicunt. Nemo illic archisynagogus Judæorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum *Presbyter*, non mathematicus, non aruspex, non aliptes."[1] Again, Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, in a letter to the Church of Gortyna, speäks of Philip, their *bishop;* in another, to the Church of Amastris, of Palma, their *bishop;* in another, to the Church of Gnossians, of Pinytus, their *bishop.*[2] Other authorities he gives, and amongst them the *Apostolical Canons*, very many of which, he says, appear to have been written in the *second century.* And though he admits that in the Apostles' time there may seem to be some confusion in the names of bishop and presbyter, yet Theodoret, he observes, accounts for it as follows:—In the age of the Apostles themselves, there were three orders in the Church; bishops, then called also *apostles; presbyters*, sometimes called by that name, and sometimes by the name of bishops; and *deacons;*—but afterwards, the name of *apostles* being strictly confined to those who were such, and expiring with them, the name of *bishops* was given to the priests of the first order; and that of *presbyters* to those of the second order: the name of *apostles* having ceased to be given to priests of the first order before the martyrdom of Ignatius. Thus, according to Theodoret, bishops and presbyters were distinguished, both in office and name, under Ignatius.

[3] "Moreover, the testimony of Jerome," he adds, "to the existence of the three orders in the Church before the martyrdom of Ignatius, is express." In a letter to Evagrius, he writes, "that we may know the apostolical tradition, taken from the Old Testament, even that as Aaron, his sons, and the Levites were in the temple, so

[1] Flav. Vopiscus in Saturnino, c. vii. et viii. See Lardner. vii. p. 364.

[2] Routh, Reliq. Sacr. i. p. 169; Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 23.

[3] Ibid. p. 176.

should there be bishops, and presbyters, and deacons in the Church." And again, on St. Matthew (c. xxiii.), he says, "which the Apostles also did, ordaining presbyters and bishops in every province." And once more, in his commentary upon Titus, "before that, by the instigation of the devil, there were parties in religion, and it was said, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the Churches were governed by a common council of presbyters; but when each man thought those whom he had himself baptized his own, not Christ's, it was decreed throughout the whole world, that one of the presbyters should be elected to preside over all the rest, to whom the whole care of the Church should belong, and that thus the seeds of schism should be taken away." And again—that "afterwards one was elected, as a remedy against schism, lest every one drawing partisans to himself, should split the Church of Christ in pieces. For that at *Alexandria*, from Mark, the Evangelist, even to Heracias and Dionysius, *Bishops*, the *Presbyters* always named one out of their body to be placed in a higher rank, as Bishop."

"This, then," says Pearson, "was, without all doubt, the opinion of Jerome, that although in the writings of the Apostles, particularly whilst Peter and Paul flourished, no difference was to be found, as appeared to him, between those called bishops and presbyters; yet, that towards the end of the Apostles' time, a little before the death of St. Peter and St. Paul, or certainly before the death of St. John, it was decreed throughout all the world, that one man should be set above the rest, to whom the whole care of the Church should belong, and who should be called peculiarly the *Bishop*."

Such Jerome represents to be the primitive apostolical tradition;[1] such the remedy provided against schisms,

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 177.

which had already broken out, whilst the Apostles were alive; such the clear testimony borne by St. Mark himself, with respect to Alexandria; and, accordingly, in the catalogues of the presidents of all the Churches which Jerome thenceforward gives, he calls them all *Bishops*. "Thus, all those," continues Pearson, "who have represented the names of Bishop and Presbyter as confounded in the writings of the Apostles, have at the same time taught,[1] that either from the very first, or during the lifetime of Peter and Paul, or before the beginning of the second century, and whilst St. John was still living, there were three orders and degrees in the Church."

On these and on other grounds, which he advances, Pearson does not hesitate to affirm, that when Ignatius speaks of *bishops* as a *first*, and of *presbyters* as a *second* order, he uses those words in the sense familiarly attached to them in his own day, or in the sense in which they were used in the ecclesiastical laws.

[2] Lastly, with respect to the language of the Epistle, which Daillé contends contains words in bad taste, words employed in peculiar senses, words repeated again and again, words novel and bombastic, words not compounded according to strict rule and analogy, whilst he denounces the inscriptions as clumsy imitations of those of St. Paul, Pearson regards them as objections of no weight whatever, and which, if admitted, could in no possible way vitally affect the genuineness of the Letters. For who is to say what perfection or imperfection of style was to be expected in the real Ignatius? However they serve the good turn of drawing out Pearson, who sifts them with all the patience of the great scholar which he was; and, in so doing, takes opportunities of clearing up difficulties in his author, and of developing general features of classical

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 178.

[2] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. p. 189.

and ecclesiastical Greek, very well worth the close attention of every theological student;[1] giving proof, as he goes along, of the wide compass over which his reading had ranged, and the critical eye which he had exercised upon it. And having now "scattered the rear" of his antagonist's argument, he concludes with the observation, that "all who delight to give honour even to the *presbyter*, will find the dignity of that order nowhere better sustained than in these Epistles; and that they will nowhere discover that order established with reverence, where they do not discover also the prerogative of the bishop."

Such is a sketch of Bishop Pearson's argument for the authority of the Epistles of Ignatius; made, however, I am aware, in a manner that must be far from satisfactory to those who are intimately acquainted with the work itself which contains it; for in any attempt at abridgment of reasoning so close and consecutive, the party undertaking it must find out the constraint of his position, "æstuat infelix angusto limite," and must regret that he cannot carry away with him the conviction of his readers, in the manner which the cause, if properly pleaded, would warrant him to expect.

After this powerful vindication of the genuineness of the Epistles, the controversy slept, till the discovery of certain Syriac MSS. in the present century revived it. These MSS. consist of the three Epistles, to Polycarp, the Ephesians, and the Romans, together with some other Syriac treatises containing *extracts* from the Epistles of Ignatius. They were discovered in a monastery in the desert of Nitria in Egypt, by Mr. Tattam, in the years 1838, 1839, and 1841.

These three Epistles were found to exhibit a much shorter text even than that of the short Epistles as previously known in the Greek; and as many of the passages

[1] Pearson, Vind. Ignat. ii. c. xiv. p. 9.

thus eliminated were amongst the strongest testimonies to the authority of the Bishop in the age of Ignatius, which are to be found in these Epistles, it is not a matter for wonder that, in days like our own, the new text should be hailed with great satisfaction by many, and every effort made to recommend and sustain it.

Accordingly, it has been contended that the three Epistles now discovered in the Syriac are all of the seven that we can pronounce genuine; and that the text of these three, brief as it is, is the genuine text.

On the other hand, it is maintained, that the circumstances of the case will be best accounted for by considering the contents of the MSS. an abridgment of the shorter Epistles, as we have long possessed them; some of them omitted in it: and the substance of those which are produced, greatly curtailed. In defence of this latter hypothesis, it is argued, that if we are now to conclude the three Epistles only, viz. that to Polycarp, that to the Ephesians, and that to the Romans, genuine, because these three are all which appear in the Syriac MSS. brought from Nitria, it would have been necessary to conclude in 1839 that one of them only, viz. that to Polycarp, was genuine; the budget of MSS. brought to England by Mr. Tattam on his first expedition containing no others; that if a second excursion produced the other two, there is no reason why a third to the same, or some other monastery, might not produce the remaining four; that at all events it is very premature to affirm that, because three Epistles have turned up, there are only three in the world.

Further, that there is an *Armenian* version, printed at Constantinople in 1783, made from a *Syriac* version, which is found to contain not only the seven Epistles ordinarily accepted, but six more universally rejected; that if, therefore, we are to regulate our canon of the

Ignatian Epistles by Syriac MSS., we ought to receive thirteen instead of three.[1]

Moreover, that there are several short quotations from the Greek Epistle to the Ephesians in Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians which are not found in the *Syriac* text of that Epistle of Ignatius, and several others from others of Ignatius' Epistles in the Greek also found in Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians, where the *Epistles themselves* are wanting in the Syriac.

That there is a passage in Clemens Alexandrinus relating to the star which appeared at the Epiphany, that has all the look of being copied from one in the Epistle to the Ephesians; but though the passage is in the Greek, it is not in the Syriac text.

That there is another in Tertullian (De Carne Christi, c. v.) which has a similar correspondence with another in the same Epistle to the Ephesians; but it is in the Greek text, and not in the Syriac that it is found.

That there is a passage in Eusebius which seems to refer to one in the Epistle to the Trallians; but the Epistle to the Trallians exists in the Greek, and not in the Syriac; that the same Eusebius says, Ignatius wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians and to the Romans from Smyrna, whilst he was staying with Polycarp; but no mention is made of Smyrna in the Syriac, though it is in the Greek; that he further says, Ignatius wrote his Epistle to Polycarp from *Troas*, and in that Epistle commended to his friend's care his own Church at Antioch; both which circumstances are manifest in the Greek, but neither of them in the Syriac version.[2]

That in St. Chrysostom there are a great many short quotations from the Greek text of the Epistle to the

[1] Quarterly Review, No. clxxv. p. 74; Petermann.

[2] English Review, viii. p. 331.

Ephesians, not one of which is to be met with in the Syriac.

It is further objected, that the same collection of Syriac MSS. which supplies the text of the three Epistles, contains certain other Syriac works which, in turn, supply references to the same three Epistles, but that the corresponding passages in the two cases are not identical. What confidence, then, it is said, can we have in the text of the three Epistles being the true text? Is not the sound conclusion rather, that as the Syriac texts in the two cases differ, they are both of them translations, loose or abridged, of the original text, the Greek?

Nay, more: it is perceived that some of the quotations from the three Epistles contained in these tracts are not found in the Syriac copies of these Epistles at all, whereas they are all found in the Greek.[1]

To the argument that the context of the Syriac Epistles runs smooth from beginning to end, exhibiting no chasms, gaps, or mutilations of any kind, it is replied, that if this were true, the reasoning is of little worth; for that these Epistles are evidently written as the thoughts arose in the writer's mind, without any consecutive order, and therefore without any chain to break, as may be said, indeed, of almost all letters. But that, in this instance, the fact itself admits of dispute; for that passages in the Syriac may be pointed out, where previous matters seem to be referred to, which do, indeed, exist in the Greek, but which do not in the Syriac.[2]

That on the whole, therefore, the hypothesis that these Syriac Epistles are an epitome of the Greek, is far more probable than that the Greek Epistles are the others interpolated; more especially as it was far from uncom-

[1] English Review.
[2] Ibid viii. p. 331; Quarterly Review, clxxv. p. 92.

mon for abridgments to be made of early Christian writers, however the editor of the Syriac Epistles may deny it.[1] Novatianus is said to have abridged Tertullian; Prosper, Augustin; Eucherius, Cassian; Bede, Isidore; and many other instances of the same kind might be given.[2]

To some other suggestions of Mr. Cureton, the editor of these Syriac Epistles, and their champion, it is alleged, it is difficult to reply, because it is difficult to see how they bear on the question; as that the Syriac was the natural language of Ignatius; for what is this to the purpose, if it is not contended, even by Mr. Cureton, that the Syriac was the tongue in which the original Epistles were written? and, enamoured as he is of his new text, he has not the boldness to make this assertion;[3] though, indeed, the fact itself is disputable. Ignatius was probably a Roman; the name the same as Egnatius, which often occurs in Cicero, Tacitus, and elsewhere; and he was probably sent to Rome for execution, as being a citizen of Rome. Moreover, Antioch was a Grecian colony. Theophilus and Chrysostom did not write in Syriac; indeed, the latter expressly tells us, that those in his time who spoke this language were the more illiterate inhabitants of the country;[4] and as for the Syriac form which he discovers in certain Greek compounds, which he adduces, he forgets that the Greek Testament furnishes the same in nearly all the cases.

It should seem, therefore, that the authority of the Ignatian Epistles, as read in the shorter copies in the Greek, remains, at least, where it was when Bishop Pearson took leave of the controversy on the subject; or, if

[1] Quarterly Review, clxxv. pp. 79, 80.

[2] Churton, Pref. p. xv.

[3] Ibid. p. xiv.; Corp. Ignat. p. 278.

[4] Chrysostom, Homil. xix.; Ad Pop. Antioch.

altered at all, improved, since these MSS. bear testimony that at a very early period, not later than the beginning of the sixth century,[1] there were translations of these Epistles into the Syriac; translations which, taken as abridgments, confirm our Greek text, and add another strand to the cord of evidence by which the truth of these Epistles is bound up.

And now to return to our narrative of persecution, after a digression prompted by its history under Trajan. Ignatius, having dispatched these letters on the road, after being disappointed of landing at Puteoli, and pursuing the track of St. Paul, by a contrary wind, reached the Tiber, and so arrived at Rome. Here, whilst all the brethren kneeled about him, he offered up prayers to the Saviour for the Churches, for quiet times, and for mutual peace and love; and was then led into the amphitheatre. The wild beasts speedily did their office; but a few of the larger bones of their victim remaining, they were gathered up by the friends who had accompanied him on his last journey, and were conveyed by them to Antioch, to be deposited in the Church.[2]

[1] Cureton's Ancient Syriac Version, p. lxxxvii.

[2] Acta Martyrii St. Ignat.

CHAPTER XII.

Persecutions of the Christians in the Reign of Hadrian.—The Defences of Christianity, or Apologies.—Tertullian's Apology a Specimen.—Origen the first Writer on the Evidences of Christianity.

I NOW proceed to the annals of persecution in the reign of Hadrian, the successor of Trajan. Hadrian, perhaps, is not to be ranked amongst the princes who waged war directly against the Christians. Tertullian indeed expressly exempts him from that class;[1] and the report which prevailed, however groundless, that he had an intention to deify Jesus Christ, and build Him a temple, at any rate proves that he was not regarded as unfriendly to them.[2] Still the proceedings against them which had been carried on under Trajan, were not discontinued under him; the law which made Christianity a capital offence not being altered, and the populace exasperated against them as bitterly as before. It is true they were not to be sought for —the rescript from Trajan to Pliny secured them this boon —but if brought before the magistrate and convicted, they were to be punished. Here, however, was latitude enough left for their mal-treatment, a latitude of which the mob was quite ready to take advantage, however little the Emperor himself might personally desire it. But the populace, we may perceive, was by this time beginning to beard the Government, and to expect that whatever was their pleasure should be obeyed. The Apology of Tertullian, written some fifty years later than this period, which complains so loudly of the wrongs done to the Christians, was probably

[1] Tertullian, Apolog. § 5. | [2] Lampridius, c. 43.

composed under a Prince (Severus) who would have protected them had he been able.[1] But whilst he was engaged in his Parthian wars, the multitude, presuming upon his occupation and absence, dealt with the Christians as the sanguinary edicts on their statute-books, and their own passions which seconded those edicts, prescribed; laughing to scorn any qualification of their severity which might happen to be attempted by the reigning Prince. So does it seem to have fared with Hadrian. He was one of the most locomotive of the Emperors of Rome; "his life was almost a perpetual journey,"[2] there was not a province in his vast empire which he had not visited. However well disposed, or at least indifferent, he might be to the Christians, his irregular residence at head-quarters must have introduced laxity into his government, and have given occasion, in all probability, to those who sought it, for acting against the Christians on their own account. Certain it is that they did so; and when the sports of the amphitheatre drew the multitude together, and stimulated their thirst for blood, a cry of "Christianos ad leones" was wont to be raised, which the magistrates found it difficult to restrain. Accordingly Serenius Granianus, a Proconsul of Asia, moved by the gross injustice of such proceedings, actually appealed to the Emperor on behalf of these victims of popular rancour. The answer of Hadrian to this appeal is on record, addressed, however, not to Granianus, but to Minucius Fundanus, his successor, a circumstance perhaps significant in itself of the delay in the transaction of business which the migratory habits of the Emperor occasioned, and the slow pace at which the redress of wrongs could be procured. An answer, it may be added, which, it would appear from a fragment of Melito's, was not communicated to Fundanus

[1] Tertullian, Ad Scap. § 4; Comp. Bp. Kaye's Tertullian, p. 53.

[2] Mr. Gibbon.

only, but "to many others," by which may probably be meant the governors of provinces in general.[1] It was to the effect that parties were at liberty to take measures against the Christians after a legal manner, and before a proper tribunal, but not to assail them with importunate cries and clamour.[2] Neither were they to escape without severe punishment if the charge proved to be malicious.[3] So long as the laws of Nero were unrepealed, a rescript such as this could have simply served as a manifestation that the Emperor himself had no wish that the Christians should be hunted to the death.[4] The clause which threatened the false and vindictive accusers with retribution was plausible, but not calculated to defeat the denunciation against the Christians, made, not by individuals, but by the shouts of irresponsible multitudes in the amphitheatre. Temperament might have dictated this edict, such as it was, or some sense of justice, or possibly (for Hadrian was an investigator of curious questions) the perusal of the written "Defences of Christianity" which now began to appear. Two vindications of it of this kind were addressed to him: the one by Quadratus, perhaps a Bishop of Athens; the other by Aristides, a distinguished Christian of the same place, each of whom took advantage of the Emperor's sojourn in that capital, to put their arguments into his hands. Unfortunately a few fragments only of these documents survive. But as they are the first of a class which afterwards became numerous under the name of Apologies, and which contributed largely to

[1] Routh, Reliq. Sacr. i. p. 112.

[2] Justin Mart. Apol. § 68.

[3] It would seem from the case of Apollonius (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 21), that sometimes the punishment of the informer was capital; in that instance, the accuser as well as the accused was put to death; the former, κατὰ βασιλικὸν ὅρον, which imperial edict must have been this, though the case is here proved against the Christian.

[4] See Mosheim, De Rebus Christianorum, p. 236, note.

make the character of Christianity better known, and to mitigate persecution, it may be well to set before you a general idea of them. This perhaps may be best done, as they are pretty uniform in their plan, by giving a brief analysis of one of them; and that which I will select, though in so doing I shall anticipate a little, shall be the Apology of Tertullian, by far the most remarkable of those which have come down to our times. The title itself of Apology, which means a Defence before a Judge, and which originated perhaps as to the primitive application of it, in the term used by St. Paul with reference to his three Defences, that before Felix,[1] that before the Jews,[2] and that before Agrippa,[3] is ominous of the position in which the Christians were standing in these dangerous days. That of Tertullian was written at Carthage, probably, as I have said, under the reign of Severus, and is addressed, not, perhaps, in this instance to the Emperor, but to the governors of proconsular Asia. It begins with remonstrating against the practice which obtained of condemning the Christians unheard. Evil, says he, naturally shrinks from scrutiny; Christianity courts it. If Christians are the criminals they are said to be, let them, at least, be put upon a level with other criminals; let them be tried before they are condemned. Let not the charges of infanticide, of devouring human flesh, and of indulging afterwards in promiscuous intercourse in the dark, be flung about without proof. Let the evidence of such doings be produced.[4] There are persons enough in the world ready to supply it; the Jew through jealousy; the soldier through a spirit of extortion; the slave out of gratification of his slavish temper. It is not the

[1] Acts xxiv. 10. Εὐθυμότερον τὰ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ ἀπολογοῦμαι.

[2] Ibid. xxv. 8. Ἀπολογουμένου αὐτοῦ.

[3] Acts xxvi. 2. Μέλλων ἀπολογεῖσθαι ἐπὶ σοῦ σήμερον.

[4] Tertullian, Apol. § 4.

Christians, but the heathen, who destroy their children; and in spite of the laws,[1] expose them without remorse to die. It is not the Christians who revel in human blood; on the contrary, they abstain even from that of animals; it is the heathen who may be seen feeding on the wild beast who has fallen in the amphitheatre, itself reeking with the gore of the swordsman it has slain.[2] It is not the Christians who are guilty of incest—they have the utmost reverence for their marriage vow; but the heathen, stimulated, indeed, by the example of their gods, and who thus pave the way for its fuller and more ample commission, by providing troops of victims for the pander out of the foundlings he picks up, whom their unnatural parents have cast out.

Neither can the charge of *Atheism* be sustained against the Christians till the character of the gods they reject is ascertained. But the gods of the heathen were simply dead men deified; and as the world must have existed and been in action before these men could occupy it, there must have been creatures before there were gods to create them (§ xi.). Neither of men, were the best always made choice of for gods; on the contrary, fornicators, adulterers, despisers of parents, and the like, were exalted to that rank, and those who would be condemned on earth, are appointed to be adored in heaven. Where was the god more wise than Cato; more just and brave than Scipio; more magnanimous than Pompey; more fortunate than Sylla; more wealthy than Crœsus: more eloquent than Tully? Then, as for the reverence due to the representatives of such gods, who *less* alive to it than the heathen themselves? Scarcely do they treat the Christians with greater contumely (§ xii.) They fashion them with axes and saws and files. They cut off

[1] Tertullian, Ad Nationes, i. § 15, p. 30.

[2] Tertullian, Ad Nationes, i. § 9.

their heads, and replace them by means of lead, glue, and rivets. They sell them to supply a need, and melt them into pots and pans when they are worn out. (§ xiii.) They let out their temples to the highest bidder, as they do the stalls of the herb-market; the auctioneer in both cases the same. They make these very temples the scenes of their abominations, and acts of lewdness are carried on whilst the incense is burning. (§ xiv.) They offer to them only the vile and refuse of their cattle, or only the heads and hoofs of such as are of a better kind, and defraud them of a third of their tithes. The players expose their vices on the stage; the philosophers express contempt for their follies in the closet. The very abjects of the amphitheatre make a mock of the attributes of some of them; and one tests the corpse with the glowing brand of Mercury, and another dispatches the remains of life with the mallet of the brother of Jove. Once more the heathen change their ground of reproach, and abandoning that of Atheism, taunt the Christians, like the Jews before them, with worshipping the head of an ass. Yet they might have known, that when Pompey took Jerusalem, and penetrated the Holy of Holies, he found there, as Tacitus, the author of the scandal, tells us, no image whatever, either of this or of any other kind. (§ xvi.) And they might have remembered that they make objects of worship themselves of all manner of four-footed beasts, with Epona to lead them. Again, they shift their attack, and accuse the Christians of paying their devotions to the *cross*. If it were so, they may be said virtually to do the same. Their figures of Pallas and Ceres are but the trunk of a cross; the trophies in their triumphs are suspended on a cross; the casts of their gods are moulded on a cross. Or is it the sun they bow down to?—a charge to which the practice of the Christians of turning to the east when they pray, gives

occasion; still, if the Christians set apart the day of the sun for a holyday, the heathen devote that of Saturn to festivity and rest.

(§ xvii.) Thus far, the Apology has been engaged in exposing the heathen; it now proceeds to describe and vindicate the Christian.

The Christians worship one God, manifested by the testimony of his works, and by that of the soul itself; of the soul, which, however sunk and debased by idolatry, still, when restored to itself, and roused as from a surfeit, a sleep, or a disease, names "God," in the general, as the name proper to the true God; exclaiming "Great God," "Good God," "God grant," and acknowledging Him as a Judge in the ejaculations, "God seeth," "I commend to God," "God shall recompense." (§ xviii.) This God, in order to make Himself more fully known, has communicated to mankind, through the Divine Spirit, a Revelation of Himself in writing; a Revelation which tells of his creation of the world; of his judgments on the earth by water and by fire; of the precepts necessary to be observed to procure his favour; of the rewards of eternal life which await his true worshippers; of the flames no less lasting, which shall be the lot of the profane; and of the resurrection previous to the consummation of these decrees. These writings, put within the reach of all, by the translation into the Greek, made through the efforts of Ptolemy, demand acceptance; first, because of their extreme antiquity, Moses having preceded the Trojan war by a thousand years (§ xix.),—such is the chronology both of Tertullian (if, indeed, this paragraph is genuine), and of Theophilus,[1]—and the latest of the prophets being as early as the earliest philosophers, law-givers, or historians of the heathen; secondly, because they contain many prophecies of events, which have

[1] Theoph. iii. § 21.

actually happened, or are happening; and, accordingly, having been found true to the past and the present, they are to be trusted for the future.

(§ xix.) But it may be retorted—nevertheless the Christians do not themselves observe the Jewish ritual, whilst they profess to believe the Jewish Scriptures. (§ xxi.) True, but those Scriptures anticipated this very contingency. They threatened the Jews, for their wickedness, with this very dispersion they are now experiencing; forbidden, as they are, even so much as to touch their native soil with the sole of their foot; they foretold that God would choose another people, gathered out of all the earth, as the recipients of his grace; that of this grace the Son of God should be the Dispenser—the Son by whom He created the world; begotten of God; of one substance with Him (ex unitate substantiæ); God of God (de Deo Deus), as light is of light (ut lumen de lumine); that this Divine Being should enter into a Virgin's womb, take flesh of her, and be born man and God. Moreover, so clear were these Scriptures on this subject, that the Jews even yet expect his advent; the point of contention between the Christians and themselves being, not whether such event was to be, but whether it has been already, the error of the Jew arising from his overlooking the fact that two advents are foretold: the one in humiliation, which has come to pass, and has proved repulsive to him by reason of the meanness of its circumstances; the other, in glory, still in futurity, the expectation of which he is led to cherish by the promise of its grandeur. (§ xxi.) This Christ, whom the Jews regarded as a mere man, cast out devils, cured the blind, healed the lepers, raised the dead, commanded the elements; but all this they attributed to magic, and, jealous of his favour with the people, they delivered Him to Pilate, who condemned Him to death. But the sun withdrew his light

at the execution of the Saviour, as the archives of Rome attest; and on the third day the grave gave Him up; and having passed forty days on earth among his Disciples, and having ordained them to the office of preaching throughout the world, He was taken up to heaven in a cloud. All which particulars were at the time reported by Pilate, himself a Christian at heart, to Tiberius. Meanwhile, in obedience to the command, the Disciples dispersed themselves on their mission; and, in confidence of the truth they taught, took patiently, even willingly, persecution at the hand of the Jews, and eventually at those of Nero, who shed their blood, which proved to be the Church's seed. Thus "do the Christians worship God through Christ."

(§ xxii.) Moreover, the demons themselves, whom the heathen adore, bear their testimony to Christ; for demons they are whom they adopt for gods, induced to do so by the powers they wield, the subtilty and tenuity of their substance affording a prodigious faculty of locomotion, and consequently an ubiquitous knowledge, which often seems to approach the prophetic. Yet they fear Christ in God, and God in Christ, and are accordingly in subjection to the servants of God and of Christ, at whose bidding they come out of the bodies of persons who have possessed, and shame the lookers-on.

(§ xxiv.) Thus, by their own confession, the gods of the heathen are no gods, and consequently the Christians no atheists, because they reject them. But if gods they were, they are still, according to the heathen system itself, subordinate to a god who is supreme, whom Plato represents as surrounded by such satellites. Moreover, freedom of religious opinion is allowed to others—every country and city has gods of its own: Syria, Astarte; Arabia, Dasares; Africa, Cœlestis; and so on; the pro-

vinces Roman, the gods not so. Why should the same privilege be denied to Christians?

(§ xxv.) But Rome has risen to greatness under her present gods, it will be said, and through her reverence for them. Were then Sterculus and Mutunus, and Larentina her auxiliaries? Would not the foreign deities naturalised at Rome have had stronger claims upon them from their own countries? How was it that Jupiter suffered Crete to fall under the Romans; and that Juno yielded up to them Carthage? Rome had not shaped her religion into what it eventually proved to be, till she was already consolidated. The religion of Numa was of the simplest. He introduced no images, no temples, no capitols rivalling the skies, but a casual altar of turf and a Samian jar, which sent up an exhalation, such as it was; a god to be seen nowhere. It was not religion, but the absence of it, that was the making of Rome. It was war; war, which confounds sacred and profane; which respects gods and enemies alike, and leads both captive. (§ xxviii.) Let this suffice to show that the Christians are not guilty of blaspheming the gods, when gods they are not; and that they are right when they refuse to do sacrifice to them, and purchase peace at such a price. The heathen, to be sure, wonder at their obstinacy, and advise them to give way; but they know that such suggestion proceeds from the devil and his angels, who are confederate against them, and they persevere, feeling that they are triumphant when they are condemned.

(§ xxviii.) When, however, they decline doing sacrifice to the gods of the heathen, it is cast in their teeth, that they do not wish Cæsar well, in whose behalf, perhaps, the offering is to be made. (§ xxix.) But, surely, it ought to appear that these deities have power to help Cæsar. He rather protects them than they him. Doubtless, if

they felt a concern about anything, it would be about their own statues; yet they are indebted for the safety even of these, to Cæsar's guards. They, forsooth, are religious, who seek this blessing for Cæsar in a quarter where the search is fruitless; and overlook that God who can indeed furnish it; and persecute his worshippers who know how to approach Him for it. (§ xxx.) For with faces upturned, with outstretched hands, with hearts corresponding, with chaste bodies, sanctified spirits, they pray each and all to God, who can grant their petitions, for rulers in general, that they may have a long life, a secure empire, a safe home, brave armies, a faithful senate, an upright people, a world at peace, and whatever else may be the wish of the man and the Cæsar. Others they leave to go to their gods with a pennyworth of incense, a drop or two of wine, the blood of a mangy ox, and a foul conscience, and wonder that the hearts of the priests are not examined rather than those of the victims. (§ xxx.) Neither can it be said that the Christians act thus out of a spirit of adulation. It is in obedience to the Word of God, which is their rule, and which enjoins them to pray not for their emperors only, but for their enemies. (§ xxxii.) Besides, the Christians are bound to wish well to the stability of the empire, seeing that, on its overthrow, violence awaits the universal world, and a sea of troubles. (§ xxxiii.) Nevertheless to call the emperor a god would be to deny that he is an emperor; for an emperor he would not be unless he were a man, a fact of which he is repeatedly reminded by the monitor at his back, when he rides in his chariot on the day of his 'Triumph.' (§ xxxv.) But because they will not disgrace themselves by keeping the Festival of the Emperor with the ordinary rites, they are denounced as public enemies! Certainly they will not sink the city into a tavern, on that occasion, nor rush in troops to deeds of

lust and violence. They cannot think that those things are fit to be done on the festal day of the ruler, which are not fit to be done on any other day. They challenge the Quirites themselves, the native populace of the Seven Hills, who charge them with disloyalty to the prince, to say whether their own hearts would bear examination on this matter; whether they are themselves sincere at the very moment when their tongues are exclaiming—"May Jupiter take from our years to add to thine!" True, it will be said, but it is only the dregs of the people to whom these remarks apply. Has, then, no unfriendly whisper escaped from the senate, the knights, the camp? Whence came the Cassii, the Nigri, the Albini? Were all these Christians, or were they Romans? Who are they that consult astrologers, soothsayers, augurs, magicians, touching the life of Cæsar, paying their vows all the while to him and his genius? (§ xxxvi.) Loyalty to the Emperor is not made apparent by an outward rite, but by a sentiment of hearty good-will towards him; and the religion of the Christians teaches them to have charity in themselves not only to him, but to all men, foes even as well as friends. (§ xxxvii.) And is it not notorious, that though the Christians are assailed with stones and firebrands, and have even their dead bodies dishonoured, they never retaliate? and yet it would be easy for them to have their revenge. A few torches would suffice for it in a single night. Numbers are not wanting to them. "They are a people of yesterday," no doubt, but they fill cities, islands, castles, municipalities, assemblies, the camp, the tribes, the companies, palace, senate, forum; in short, every place but the temples. Neither is courage lacking to them, for they are ready to suffer, it is evident, where their religion calls for it; nay, were they but simply to withdraw themselves, such a multitude are they, that the very secession would create alarm: not to say that

it would deliver the State up to those evil spirits, who finding the house empty would take possession of it. (§ xxxviii.) The Christians cannot be construed into a faction or confederacy, dangerous to the Government, and war be waged against them on that account. They are dead to ambition. No affairs are less to their taste than public affairs. They certainly renounce the shows; will have nothing to do with the circus, the theatre, the arena. The Epicureans are left to choose their own pleasures; why should not the Christians, though their selection may not be the same? (§ xxxix.) But as faction or confederacy is laid to their charge, let us see to what it really amounts. The foundation of it is a common religion. They assemble together in a congregation, and beset God with prayers. They pray for the emperors, for authorities, for quiet times, for an interval before the end of all things. They administer exhortations, reproofs, and godly censure. They excommunicate. Approved elders preside over them. They have a treasury made up of the voluntary monthly offerings of such as are charitably disposed. They draw upon that treasury, not for feasts and revels, but for the relief of orphans, of aged persons, of the shipwrecked, of the prisoner. They are "Brethren," so called, both because they love one another, and are children of the same Father, even God. They have a common property; they have a common meal; no voluptuous banquet, requiring an army of cooks, as elsewhere, but simply a meal "where *love* is," by which name, indeed, it is designated. They begin it with prayer, with prayer they end it; and it is not in order to indulge in scenes of revelry and riot, that they disperse. (§ xl.) Such is the faction or confederacy of Christians. Rather should such titles be applied to those who plot together to defame them; who, if the Tiber overflows its banks, or the Nile keeps within its channel; if the

heavens be shut up and the earth quake; if there be famine and pestilence, or any other national calamity, forthwith exclaim, "Christianos ad leones." Yet did these things never come to pass till there were Christians, forsooth? (§ xli.) Rather are these judgments, if judgments they are, imputable to those who worship false gods, and neglect the True One; whilst the Christians themselves, owing to their social connection with the others, unhappily share in them.

(§ xlii.) But the Christians, it is said, are unprofitable citizens. How so, when they are living amongst others, partakers with them in food, dress, furniture? They are not Brachmans—they are not hermits—they frequent the same forum, shambles, baths, taverns, shops, inns, markets, as other men. They do not repair to the same religious services, it is true, nor sit down, *e. g.* at the Feast of Bacchus, like others; but they feed elsewhere on the same supplies. They do not wear chaplets, but they possess themselves of flowers. They do not appear at the games, but they purchase elsewhere such things as are sold there. They do not contribute to the dues of the temples, but they give alms to the poor; distributing more in a single street than falls to the lot of the temple; it is too much to expect them to contribute to mendicant gods also. Whilst they pay taxes with a scrupulosity, which, as compared with the ordinary practice, more than balances whatever other losses the State sustains by them. (§ xliii.) At the same time, certain classes there are, no doubt, who may justly complain of the unprofitableness of the Christians—panders, procurers, miscreants of the baths, assassins, poisoners, soothsayers, and the like. (§ xliv.) Nor is this all; amongst the numberless culprits that are brought before the magistrates, when is there found a Christian? (§ xlv.) It is natural that it should be so. Others are deterred from crime simply by the

fear that human sagacity may detect, and human authority punish it; the Christians, by a sense of God's presence, to whom nothing is hid, and from whose vengeance nothing can escape. (§ xlvi.) But the philosophers, it is urged in reply, are upon a level with the Christians in all this —they, too, have their notions of morality—they preach justice, patience, sobriety, charity, innocence. Then why not put the Christians on a level with them in the treatment dealt out to them? They are not compelled to do sacrifice, to take oaths, to join processions. They are allowed to undermine the gods, and disparage the prince with impunity, if not with approval. But in point of fact, the philosophers are not upon a level with the Christians in their moral teaching. Socrates, one of the first of that class, was denounced as a corrupter of the youth of Athens. Diogenes had his Phryne. He too, with a pride of another sort from that of Plato, trampled his gorgeous furniture under foot. Pythagoras and Zeno each affected the chief rule in their respective cities. Lycurgus had so little self-control, that he starved himself to death because the Lacedemonians had presumed to alter his laws. Yet all these retain among you the name and reputation of wise men; whereas, if any amongst us walks unworthily of his calling, he is at once expelled from our body. Where, then, is the likeness between the philosopher and the Christian—the disciple of Greece and of Heaven—the trafficker for fame and for salvation—the talker and the doer—the builder and the destroyer—the author of error and the restorer of truth —its plunderer and its guardian? (§ xlvii.) Besides, the Scriptures, the antiquity of some of which is far beyond the date of the philosophers, is the magazine from which they drew whatever was good in their systems, though by their sophistries they debased and perplexed the knowledge they derived from them. Thus with respect to the

Deity: they must needs discuss his quality, his nature, his seat; whether He is corporeal or incorporeal; whether He consists of atoms or of numbers; whether He is active or inactive. With respect to the world, whether it is created or uncreated. With respect to the soul, whether it is eternal or dissoluble. Nay, such are some of their fabulous corruptions of the truth, that they have exposed it to ridicule; and a judgment to come is scoffed at, because they have established a tribunal in the shades below; and a hell, because they have their Pyriphlegethon; and a paradise, because they have their Elysian Fields. But whence is it that these caricatures are derived, save from those mysteries of our own, which are long anterior to them; the one the substance, the other the distorted reflection? (§ xlviii.) Yet, mark the unfairness of mankind. If a philosopher, a Pythagoras, for example, holds the opinion that a man may be made out of a beast, and that animals are to be avoided as food, lest in devouring them we should be eating our ancestors, he makes proselytes; whereas if a Christian maintains that a future body is fashioned out of an antecedent one, Caius out of Caius, the identity preserved, he is pelted with sticks and stones: yet, what is incredible in the proposition, that whereas the man who did not exist once, does exist now, the same after he has ceased to exist shall exist again?—the second process presenting fewer difficulties than the first, and nature full of analogies to confirm it.

(§ xlix.) But even if the doctrines of the Christians were false, they are at any rate useful. Those who hold them, having a fear of punishment and hope of reward ever before their eyes, are improved by them; and that which is beneficial should rather be presumed to be true. At the very least they are harmless; and should be punished, if at all, by derision, not the sword, fire, the cross,

and the wild beast—and these are the weapons wielded against the Christians not merely by the populace, but by their superiors, who are desirous to pay them court; though, after all, they cannot be touched except of their own free choice, for a matter of choice it is, whether they will be Christians. (§ l.) Why, then, complain, it will be replied, if they have their own wish? They have it as the soldier has it when he fights a battle: he does not take delight in the danger, but incurs it in the hope of victory and spoil. The battle of the Christian is to be condemned to death in the heathen courts for the truth's sake, and his victory and spoil is the glory of pleasing God and the gain of everlasting life. Meanwhile the world cannot extinguish the Christians. The seed of the Christians is their blood. Their very obstinacy, which is objected to them, pleads their cause and propagates their principles. Lookers-on are set to inquire what prompts it; those who inquire pass over to them; those who pass over are eager to suffer with them, that so they may obtain the favour of God and forgiveness of Him through the blood of his Son.

Such is a specimen of these Apologies, the earliest of which, as I have said, made their appearance under Hadrian, the effects of whose reign upon the cause of Christianity I am now considering. It is obvious they were not intended as bodies of evidence for the truth of Christianity, formally composed with a view to the conversion of the heathen, in which light Mr. Gibbon contemplates them.[1] They were writings of which the object was altogether different, meant to obtain for the Christians licence to live, and eat their bread unmolested. So far as they bear upon the evidences, and this they undoubtedly do, it is incidentally and by the by. The time was not come for the essays of "able advocates." It was just the com-

[1] Chapter xv. at the end.

plaint of Theophilus, a writer about the middle of the second century, that Autolychus, the friend to whom he addresses his work, though devoted to the study of all profane literature, would give himself no trouble to investigate the affairs or the writings of the Christians.[1] It was equally the complaint of Justin, another writer of nearly the same date, that Crescens, he, too, a philosopher, took upon himself to rail at the Christians without showing any concern to learn the character and tenets of the parties he was attacking.[2] The dissertation of Origen against "the Word of Truth" by Celsus, may be reckoned the first elaborate work on the Evidences of Christianity that was published; the details of that religion having at length forced themselves on the attention of the schools (for Celsus, too, was a philosopher), and the necessity of conducting the attack, if an attack there must needs be, with more knowledge of the subject having become apparent. The quotations from Celsus made by Origen, are enough to show that he had thought it expedient to possess himself of some acquaintance at least with the facts of the Revelation he was libelling, and not waste his weapons by shooting them altogether at random. It is probable, however, that even Origen, in the choice of his arguments, would not satisfy Mr. Gibbon, or always give the preference to such as would seem to him the most judicious. But it may be suspected that he and the other early Christian writers were better judges of the reasoning likely to prove effectual amongst those to whom it was addressed, than Mr. Gibbon. What is called the "spirit of the age," is with difficulty appreciated or even apprehended by any but contemporaries; and for the historian, who writes seventeen or eighteen hundred years after the events of which he is telling, and under circumstances totally changed, to pronounce

[1] Theophilus, iii. § 4. | [2] Justin, 2 Apol. § 3.

with confidence on the line which the advocates of any given cause ought to have adopted, is mere presumption. How very greatly the character of the times when the Apologies were produced differed from our own, may be guessed, by observing the controversies of those days, especially those carried on with the Heretics; the champions of the Church then spending all their strength in refuting opinions which would now be regarded simply as the ravings of delirium, utterly unworthy of a thought.

CHAPTER XIII.

Continued Persecutions of the Christians.—Hadrian.—Antoninus Pius.—M. Aurelius.—Deaths of Polycarp and Justin Martyr.—Commodus.—More favourable Condition of the Christians.—Severus, a Persecutor.—Libelli.—Deaths of Leonidas and others.—Variable conduct of Severus.

BUT to return to the reign of Hadrian, and the troubles to Christianity which attended it. However unfair it may be to number him amongst the persecutors of the Christians, he was indirectly the means of others being so, in one quarter at least of his dominions.

The Jews—who had never been reconciled to the authority of the Romans; who were ever burning to cast off a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear—were driven to extremities by this Emperor, whose contumely was even more trying than the absolute wrongs inflicted by his predecessors. Though Titus had scarcely left one stone upon another in Jerusalem, still a town seems to have risen out of the ruins, and to have been occupied by a remnant of the native race, unable to tear themselves away from a spot hallowed by so many glorious associations. But Hadrian now threatened to extinguish utterly the religious capital of the nation; to convert Jerusalem, the Holy City, into a Roman colony, and build a Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on the very site of the Temple of Jehovah. The Jews flew to arms the more readily, as at this moment there presented himself a leader in the person of Barchocab, the son of a

Star, who, agreeably to his name, announced himself as the long-expected Messiah, and was accepted in that character by the fanatical populace. The Jews, as I have already said, were always the bitterest of the enemies of the Christians; and the character now assumed by this adventurer added a personal poignancy to this natural hatred of them; for, of course, they would have no dealings with the impostor. Accordingly, he persecuted them with the utmost rancour, and made their "refusal to deny Jesus of Nazareth a signal for their death."[1] But the manner in which the providence of God works good out of evil, and renders the persecutor the instrument for making the Gospel known, converting even him against his will into an apostle, receives illustration from a trifling incident belonging to the annals of this rebellion. For the Jew, Trypho by name, whom Justin tells us he accidentally encountered, perhaps in Greece, and with whom he entered into conversation on the subject of Christianity, leaving him almost, if not altogether, persuaded to be a Christian, was probably thrown in his way by being one of those who had quitted Palestine to escape from these troubles;[2] and dispersions of this kind, especially when created by causes connected with religious belief, often brought strange parties together into profitable conference; the circumstances under which they met naturally turning their conversation to subjects of the highest concern.

Nor was this all; the entire revolution which this political convulsion wrought in the condition of Jerusalem, had its effect on the cause of the Christians. Hadrian, not content with having demolished the old city and replaced it by another totally different in the character of its architecture, and deriving its very name of Ælia Capitolina from that of its heathen founder, forbad the

[1] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 31. | [2] Justin Mart. Dial. § 1.

Jews not only to inhabit it, but even to set foot within its precincts.[1] But this harsh and vindictive proceeding was the means of dissolving that fusion, if I may so speak, of the Jew with the Christian, which had so long corrupted the Christian faith, and debased the Christian character in the eyes of the heathen. For the Church of Jerusalem, still subsisting in that neighbourhood, and still anxious to occupy the capital as before, was prohibited from so doing, whilst its members were regarded as Jews; and accordingly nothing would suffice to qualify them for residence in that city, but to renounce, as St. Paul had so long before prescribed to the Galatians to do, the observance of the Law of Moses. This, therefore, they did, and the better to make the distinction, hitherto but imperfectly perceived, between Christian and Jew understood, they elected Marcus, probably a Roman, certainly not a Jew, for their bishop, and under these circumstances were permitted to dwell at Jerusalem. By this proceeding, therefore, Hadrian seems to have effected a reformation in the early Church, somewhat analogous to that effected by Henry VIII. in our own mediæval one; tyranny having been overruled for good in either case: in the former, the Gospel purged of Jewish rites which had combined with it and debased it; in the latter, of Romish, which had formed a similar alliance with similar results.

Hadrian was succeeded by Antoninus Pius, but how the Christians fared under him, it is not easy to state with confidence. That he was no sanguinary persecutor of them is certain; whether a persecutor at all, doubtful. Tertullian, when arguing the iniquity of the laws against the Christians, from the respective characters of the Emperors who enforced them or shrunk from enforcing, says, that "no Hadrian, no Vespasian, no *Pius*, carried them

[1] Justin Mart. 1 Apol. § 47; Dial. § 15.

into execution."[1] Melito, in the Apology which he addressed to Antoninus Verus, quotes the example of Antoninus as pleading in favour of a merciful treatment of the Christians:—"Thy father wrote to various cities, amongst others, to the Larissæans, the Thessalonians, the Athenians, that they should not excite the people against us; and I am persuaded that your own sentiments, which are more favourable towards us, as well as more philosophical than his, will induce you to comply with our wishes;"[2] qualified commendation certainly, but still enough to indicate that, on the whole, Antoninus was at least not accounted an enemy to the Christians.

On the other hand, Eusebius affirms distinctly, that in the first year of the reign of Antoninus Pius, Telesphorus, Bishop of Rome, died, and at the same time adds, that Irenæus describes him as perishing by martyrdom.[3] If he fell a victim to persecution, it is probable that others shared the same fate, and it is certain that the Apology of Justin Martyr, which is dedicated to Antoninus as well as to his colleagues, was written when the Church was in trouble. Discrepancies of this kind, however, occasionally presenting themselves in the annals of persecution, may be accounted for by the laws against the Christians still remaining on the statute-book, and so furnishing the malicious individuals or the populace at the games, the power of taking away the life of the Christian, even when the reigning prince, had his own private taste been consulted, would have rather left him unmolested. But the chief magistrate's hands were tied; any attempt

[1] Tertullian, Apol. § 5.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 26; Routh, Reliq. Sacr. i. p. 112.

[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 10. Pearson dates the martyrdom of Telesphorus at A.D. 122, in the reign of Hadrian; but I do not see that he attempts any explanation of the passage in Eusebius, which speaks expressly of the martyrdom occurring in the first year of Antoninus Pius. See Minor Theolog. Works, ii. p. 497.

to suspend the laws being only likely to have exposed him to the suspicion of entertaining a contempt for the gods, and a fondness for the atheists.

Marcus Aurelius succeeded Antoninus Pius, and, though his adopted son and constant associate, he differed very widely from him in his treatment of the Christians. Since Nero's reign none had been so unpropitious to them as his. Indeed, Melito alleges in his Apology, written under this Emperor, that the Christians were harassed throughout Asia by some *new* decrees of which advantage was taken by informers to plunder and injure them night and day;[1] possibly some premium on their conviction being now proposed, to be raised out of their effects. At once a member of the college of heathen priests, learned in all their mysteries, insomuch that he could perform expertly all their rites, and had the instruments of their service introduced upon his coins, and also an early and persevering disciple of the Stoics, hardened in all that unfeeling philosophy; in either capacity Aurelius conceived a distaste for the Christians, and made them bitterly sensible of it throughout the whole course of his reign. In none were so many Apologies written as in his. Justin Martyr, Melito, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Tatian, Miltiades, all contributed documents of this nature, though not all bearing that name; several of them still surviving entire, and at hand to furnish us with materials for our history; some, again, all but lost. From them we learn with certainty the character of the persecution, and the victims of it. How entirely at the mercy of the world the Christians lay in the actual state of the law even independently of the supplemental severity given to it by Aurelius; how hot the flame could in a moment be made, whenever it was

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 26; see Mosheim, De Rebus Christianorum, p. 242, note.

the pleasure of prince or people, much more of both (which was now the case), to fan it, is manifest from the Apology (the second) of Justin addressed to this Emperor. Witness the following incident of the day. A female convert to Christianity determines to release herself from a profligate husband, and procures a divorce. Upon this he denounces her as a Christian. She appeals to the Emperor, and, whilst the appeal is pending, she is safe. Meanwhile the husband directs his attack against her teacher. By a stratagem he obtains legal evidence that Ptolemy (for that was his name) was a Christian also, and brings him before Urbicus, the Roman officer who had cognizance of such matters. Urbicus puts to him the question whether it is so; he frankly confesses, and is condemned. One Lucius, a looker-on, moved by the injustice of the sentence, exclaims to Urbicus, "How is this? you punish a man, not for being an adulterer, a fornicator, a murderer, a thief, a robber, in short, a misdoer of any kind; but simply for avowing himself to be a Christian. Your judgment is unworthy of Cæsar the Pius; of Cæsar, his son, the Philosopher, and of the sacred Senate." "Say you so? Then thou, too, art one of these men?" "I do not deny it," replies Lucius; and he is forthwith led to execution.[1] Thus a family quarrel, an incautious word dropped by an injudicious friend, a flash of anger in a splenetic magistrate, suffice to take away the lives of one after another in this reign of terror when the gravamen of the offence was Christianity alone. Nay, Justin himself, the teller of the tale, at the very time had signed his own death-warrant unwittingly, by venturing a defence of the Christians against Crescens; and whilst he convicted the philosopher (for such he was) in the eyes of the bystanders of utter ignorance of the subject he was handling, he planted in him feelings of

[1] Justin Mart. 2 Apol. § 2.

mortification and resentment which found their issue in compassing his death;[1] and which the temper of the times of Aurelius enabled him to carry into effect.

Polycarp was another victim whose death disgraced this reign, and as the cases we have already mentioned were cases of private malice, so this rather belonged to those of public and popular outrage. The history of Polycarp forms a remarkable chapter in that of the Primitive Church. He himself, from his early opportunities and long life, was one of the most effective channels of Apostolical Tradition. In his youth the disciple of St. John, he delighted in his age to tell of that Apostle's sayings, and those of the other Apostles; of the discourses, the miracles, and the teaching of the Lord, which they recollected and repeated to him.[2] Appointed Bishop of Smyrna by these same Apostles, in full possession of their instructions as they were of their Master's, and thus qualified to preserve through a critical period, the very infancy of the Church, the discipline and doctrine of its Founder; active, moreover, and zealous in the development of his functions, and applying the line and plummet with indisputable authority to all the aberrations of the day from the rule of faith, Polycarp made his influence felt over a great part of Asia, and was the light by which the Churches walked for a long season.[3] Nor was it confined even to Asia; whatever might be the cause which led him to Rome, to Rome he went, under the episcopacy of Aniectus, and having rebuked the Heretics there also, face to face, and with the confidence of one who felt that the truth was in him, and that evidence of it he possessed which was overwhelming, he returned to Smyrna.[4] The element, however, in which the Christian lived in those days was ever charged with noxious

[1] Tatian, § 19.
[2] Irenæus, Fragm. p. 340.
[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 14.
[4] Irenæus, iii. c. 3, § 4.

matter which a spark might explode; the cry of *Atheists*, which at this time more especially was very loudly raised against them, as we may gather from the elaborate pains taken by the Apologists to respond to it,[1] seems to imply that some public calamity or other had occurred which sufficed to direct the wrath of the populace to the impious parties they thought the authors of it; and on the occasion of some public games, when the scenes of the amphitheatre naturally begot in the people an appetite for blood, ominous shouts were heard for Polycarp, the chief offender. There was still time for escape, but he was loath to leave the spot where his duty lay, till, persuaded by the entreaties of his friends, he retired to one or more places of concealment, in the neighbourhood, and waited the event. His retreat, however, was discovered; and though he still perhaps might have baffled his pursuers, he thought it more becoming to resign himself at once into their hands, and, descending from an upper chamber, delivered himself up, only requesting an hour's delay before they removed him, in which he might address himself to his prayers. In these, he commended to God all with whom he had ever been connected, whether high or low, and the Holy Church throughout all the world; and this done, mounted an ass which was provided for him, and was conducted to the city. He entered the Stadium, when a voice from aloft, heard by many of the Christians, though the speaker was not to be distinguished, exclaimed, "Polycarp, play the man." Meanwhile, the news circulated that Polycarp was taken, and there was a great shouting. And now the Proconsul would fain have persuaded him to renounce his faith, and not throw away his life. "Swear," said he, "by the fortune of Cæsar—be obstinate no longer—cry, 'Away with the Christians'—one reproach of Christ and I will let you

[1] See especially Athenagoras, Legatio.

go." "Eighty and six years," replied Polycarp, "have I served Him, and no harm hath He done me; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" But he persisting that he should swear by the fortune of Cæsar, "If you vainly imagine," answered Pōlycarp, "that I shall swear by the fortune of Cæsar, as pretending that you know not what I am, be assured once for all that I am a Christian; and if you desire to be informed what it is to be a Christian, give me a day and you shall hear." "I will cast you to the wild beasts if you do not change your mind," was then the threat. "Bring the wild beasts hither," says Polycarp, "for change my mind from the better to the worse I will not." "Think you scorn of the wild beasts? I will subdue your spirit by the flames." "The flames with which you menace me endure but for a time, and are soon extinguished; but a fire there is reserved for the wicked, whereof you know not; the fire of a judgment to come, and of punishment everlasting. Why do you tarry? do with me what you list." So saying, his courage rose, his countenance beamed with grace and animation; and, instead of being himself troubled at what was addressed to him, he struck the Proconsul with astonishment. "Polycarp," proclaimed he by the voice of a herald, in the midst of the Stadium, "has confessed himself to be a Christian." Then the whole multitude exclaimed aloud, "This man is that teacher of Asia, that father of the Christians, that destroyer of our gods, the same who forbids the people to sacrifice and do worship;" and they cried out and importuned the master of the shows to let loose upon him the lions. This, however, he refused to do, alleging that it was too late; that they had done with the wild beasts. Then they demanded with one accord that he should be burned alive—the manner of death he should die, which had been foretold to him in a dream. No sooner were the words uttered,

than the multitude, the Jews more especially, as is their wont on such occasions, hastened to the manufactories and baths for wood and faggots. The pile being ready, he stripped off his clothes, loosed his girdle, and would have taken off his shoes; but was long hindered by the eagerness of his friends, who thronged about him, desirous to touch him. And now the fuel was heaped around him, and they were on the point of nailing him to the stake, when he said, "Let be; He who gives me strength to bear the flame will enable me, without the help of your spikes, to stand to the faggots without flinching;" so they forebore to pierce him with nails, and contented themselves with binding him. Accordingly, with his hands behind him, and tied like "a ram for an offering to Almighty God," he said—"O Father of thy blessed and beloved Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received knowledge of Thee! O God of angels and powers, and of all created things, and of all the generations of the Just who live in thy sight, I give thanks to Thee that Thou hast thought me worthy of this day and this hour; of taking a part in the number of the martyrs, and in the cup of Christ, unto the resurrection for life eternal both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost; amongst whom may I be admitted to appear before Him this day, a goodly and acceptable sacrifice which Thou hast prepared beforehand and foreshown, God faithful and true. For this, therefore, and for all things, I praise Thee, I bless thee, I glorify Thee, through the Eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son; through whom be unto Thee, together with Him, in the Holy Ghost, glory, both now and ever. Amen."

The Epistle from the people of Smyrna to the Churches, preserved in Eusebius, from which all these particulars are derived, adds some others, the truth of which has been disputed. The original narrative cer-

tainly gives to them an air of the miraculous; they may, however, be readily accounted for by natural causes. One of them, that the flame, enveloping the martyr like a sheet, nevertheless still refused to consume him; the other, that an aromatic odour, as of incense, issued from the burning mass. At all events, his death being protracted, the executioner was called in, who despatched him with a sword.[1] "Thus perished," says the letter, "this most remarkable man, the apostolical and prophetic teacher of our times, being Bishop of the Catholic Church of Smyrna." Great was the desire of the Christians to possess themselves of his remains, but it was denied them; the Jews more especially suggesting to the magistrates, that the people might thus be led away with a new folly; and abandoning their crucified Master, might turn to this fresh object of devotion. "Fools," add the authors of the Epistle containing these details (and I quote the passage to show how far the Church of this day was, from entertaining the ideas which subsequently prevailed on the subject of saints)—"Fools, not to know that we can never abandon Christ, Christ who suffered for the salvation of the whole world, and worship any other. For Him we *adore*, being the Son of God; whereas the martyrs we *love* as the disciples and followers of the Lord, and with reason do we love them, for their exceeding affection to their own King and Teacher; with whom may we too have our communion and fellowship."

"The Centurion, therefore," continue the writers of the

[1] The copy of the Epistle adds, according to the ordinary reading, that "a dove came out and abundance of blood!" Ἐξῆλθε περιστερὰ καὶ πλῆθος αἵματος. Jortin (Remarks on Ecclesiastical Hist. i. p. 317) would read ἐξῆλθεν ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ καὶ πλῆθος αἵματος. On the left side, even so much blood as to extinguish the fire. Quoting Hom. Il. M. 239—

Εἴτ' ἐπὶ δέξι' ἴωσι πρὸς ἠῶ τ' ἠέλιόν τε,
Εἴτ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ τοίγε, ποτὶ ζόφον ἠερόεντα.

Eusebius does not name it.

letter, "seeing the importunity of the Jews, placed the body in the midst of the pile, and committed it to the flames; whilst we, gathering up, after a while, the bones, more precious than jewels and refined above gold, deposited them where it was convenient; and where it may be, the Lord will hereafter give us the opportunity of assembling together in joy and gladness, to celebrate this second birthday of the martyr, in commemoration of the past, and for the encouragement and discipline of future times."

Polycarp was the most conspicuous, but by no means the only sufferer of this date. Indeed, twelve others died also at Smyrna, whose names have not survived them; as well as several still known, Metrodorus, a Presbyter of the heresy of the Marcionites; and Pionius, a disciple, alike remarkable for the activity of his ministry and the severity of his sufferings. Pergamus witnessed similar scenes about the same time; Carpus, Papylus, and a female called Agathonice, all having there finished their course as martyrs.[1]

Of Justin I have already spoken, and the hand by which he fell; a false philosophy, probably stimulated, as I have said, by the example and patronage of the prince, proving his dooms-man. "I, too, expect," says he, "to be betrayed by one or other of those philosophers so called, and to be fastened to the stake, perhaps, by that unphilosophical and braggart Crescens, for true philosopher he is not fit to be called, who denounces in public as impious men and Atheists the Christians of whom he knows nothing; indulging in his misrepresentations for the mere gratification of the crowd."[2] Certainly, Justin was a mark in more ways than one for this tribe, for, independently of the offence he was to them as a Christian, no writer of the day draws a more sarcastic picture of the

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. c. 15. | [2] Justin Mart. 2 Apol.

different sects into which they were divided.[1] He probably expired at Rome.

But the field of martyrdom in this reign which has been laid bare to the fullest extent, is Gaul, though the historian, who has preserved the evidence, produces the havoc made of the Christians in that one province merely as an example of what was the process going on all the world over.[2] This evidence is contained in an Epistle from the Brethren of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne to those of Asia and Phrygia—Lyons and Vienne now united as Christian communities in a sympathy of faith and suffering, as they were once opposed in pagan strife, the followers of imperial leaders equally worthless.[3] The document itself strongly resembles one of those which are met with in the pages of Fox; the same scenes of horror, the same minute and graphic details of them. It tells of the gradual advance of the storm which in the end burst upon the Christians with such frightful force; of their exclusion, in the first instance, from the forum, baths, and places of public resort; then, of their being hunted, beaten, and pelted with stones; next, of certain amongst them being carried before the magistrate, imprisoned, and put to the torture, to the great consternation of the brethren at large, who feared that their constancy might forsake them, as in some cases it did. It relates that, not satisfied with this, the magistrate now commanded an active search to be made for them;—that the household slaves of the Christians, being heathens, and having the fear of the rack before their eyes, laid to their charge Thyestean feasts, incestuous revels, and abominations not lawful even to utter or conceive;—that

[1] Justin Mart. Dial. § 2.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 1, Preface. Μυριάδας μαρτύρων ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην διαπρέψαι στοχασμῶ λαβεῖν ἔνεστιν ἀπὸ τῶν καθ' ἓν ἔθνος συμβεβηκότων.

[3] Tacitus, Hist. i. c. 65, quoted by Routh, i. p. 301.

these calumnies getting abroad, the people at large, no longer restrained by any ties of blood or friendship, broke out into all manner of excesses against them—"whosoever killed them, thinking that he was doing God service;" the mob, the magistrate, and the soldiery, vindictive alike;—that Pothinus, the venerable Bishop of Lyons, feeble, sickly, and in his 96th year, after being dragged before the judgment seat, was mobbed to death on his way to the prison, surviving at least the violence he experienced but two days; Irenæus himself, it may be added, subsequently elected successor to Pothinus, owing his escape in all probability, to his absence at Rome, on the business of the Gallic Church;—that Maturus, and Sanctus, scourged, torn of wild beasts, and fried in a heated iron chair, after a series of protracted sufferings, were left to die;—that Blandina, and with her Ponticus, her brother, a youth of 15, whose tender years released him with less delay from his tormentors, having been brought daily into the amphitheatre, to witness these horrors, was herself at last submitted to the wild beasts and the chair; and to crown all, was inclosed in a net and cast before the bulls to be trampled and gored by them, till finally she was despatched by the merciful knife of the executioner;[1]—that Attalus, a famous man amongst the Christians, and therefore the more fiercely clamoured for by the populace, was led round the amphitheatre amidst the yells of the spectators, with a tablet before him, on which was inscribed in Latin, "This is Attalus, the Christian;"—that the governor finding he was a Roman, withdrew him, as he did others under the same circumstances, for a time, till Cæsar's pleasure could be learned; that it turned out simply to be, for him and for all who would renounce Christ, to be released, and for

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 1.

those who refused, to be beheaded; and that, accordingly, they were all slain with the sword.

But why should we linger longer on this page of horrors, which, however, we have by no means exhausted? Suffice it to say in conclusion, that to the other troubles experienced by the Christians who survived, this was added, that they were not permitted to commit the bodies of their fallen friends to the grave; neither the darkness of night, nor the power of gold, nor the persuasiveness of prayer, availing to give them possession of their honoured remains; that those remains were watched with jealousy (as though it was a great gain that they should be deprived of burial), till having lain six days exposed to the elements and to every contumely, they were burned, the ashes scattered on the Rhone, which ran by, no longer in a condition, it was fondly supposed, to admit of their resurrection being possible. Such were the misfortunes which befell the Church of Christ, during the reign of Aurelius, in Gaul.

It is true, that the view we have taken of the reign of Aurelius, and the wrongs it inflicted on the Christians, would be quite inconsistent with the account sometimes given of the "Thundering Legion," as it is called, which belongs to this same period. But that account is apocryphal in the aspect of it to which I refer. That the Emperor Aurelius experienced an extraordinary escape from perishing with his army, by thirst, in his war with the Marcomanni, is certain. The column is still standing at Rome which commemorates it; but it would seem to be the Christians themselves who ascribed the providential relief to the prayers of the Christians in the ranks, and not the Emperor. The Emperor appears, from the testimony of the pillar, to have imputed it to the intervention of Jupiter Pluvius, who is there represented as pouring the water out of an urn upon the thirsty soldiers.

That the Christians in the army who made their supplications to God in their extremity, and found the shower to follow those supplications, should have taken credit for this happy result, was natural, perhaps was not erroneous. But when the *Emperor* is made to express this sentiment, it may be suspected that there is a mistake. Eusebius, indeed, quotes Apollinaris as affirming that the legion which had performed this service by its prayers, received from *the Emperor* a name appropriate to the event, "Fulminea," but he has not confidence in his authority, and dismisses the whole with the remark, "but of these matters let every one judge as he is disposed;"[1] whilst modern scholars have discovered that there was a legion before the time of Aurelius, which had the name of Fulminea.[2] Eusebius further adds the testimony of Tertullian, in his Apology, to the existence of a letter of M. Aurelius, in which he expressly ascribes the deliverance to the intercession of the Christians, and on that account threatens the accusers of the Christians with very severe treatment.[3] But it is certain that no such letter was known to Eusebius himself, otherwise he would not have quoted it at second hand from Tertullian. And if we examine the language of Tertullian, it does not appear clear that the letter had actually been seen by him; indeed, it seems highly probable, that when he speaks of this letter he was thinking of that from Antoninus to the Commune of Asia, of which I have already made mention; and in the heat with which he wrote confounded the two.[4] The fact of the persecution under

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 5.

[2] Lardner, vii. p. 440.

[3] Tertullian, Apol. § 5.

[4] At the same time it is fair to add, that the suspicion which Lardner and others cast on the testimony borne by this letter (as reported by Tertullian) to the assistance received from the Christians, arising out of the use of the word "forte" seems unfounded. In the "Christianorum *forte* militum precationibus" the "forte" has nothing to do with

Aurelius stands upon testimony that cannot be gainsaid; the scenes of the troubles, the names of the victims, the particulars of each case, are given with so much precision as to bespeak the eye-witness in the compiler of the document which records them; but the existence of such a state of things totally excludes the belief of Aurelius being the author of a letter, which, according to Tertullian, breathed nothing but humanity towards the Christians, and gratitude to them for their services, especially when it is found that the war in Germany was previous in date to the blood-shedding at Lyons, the one having come to pass in 174, the other in 177. I need scarcely add, that the same consideration disposes likewise of the Epistle said to be addressed by Aurelius to the Senate of Rome, annexed to the Apology of Justin, and which has sometimes been represented as the one to which Tertullian alludes. The spirit of it is entirely opposed to that which dictated the persecution in Gaul, and manifests it to be spurious.

Marcus Aurelius was followed by Commodus, his son—the philanthropist by the tyrant; and yet the Christians suffered less under the latter than under the former Emperor; indeed, Mr. Gibbon represents them as actually "protected" by Commodus; a favour which he imputes with characteristic satisfaction, to the interest taken in them by Marcia,[1] a concubine of that prince.

any doubt on Tertullian's mind as to the story, but is connected with the short phrase in which it stands, and means "by the prayers of the Christians who *happened* to be amongst those soldiers"—"forte militum," *i. e.* "qui forte militabant," says Dr. Wordsworth.

[1] Hippolytus, in the Philosophumena, p. 287, speaks of a pardon obtained from Commodus for some Sardinian Christian by Marcia. Μετὰ χρόνον δὲ ἑτέρων ἐκεῖ ὄντων μαρτύρων θελήσασα ἡ Μαρκία ἔργον τι ἀγαθὸν ἐργάσασθαι. οὖσα φιλόθεος παλλακὴ Κομμόδου, προσκαλεσαμένη τὸν μακάριον Οὐίκτορα ὄντα ἐπίσκοπον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ, ἐπηρώτα τίνες εἶεν ἐν Σαρδονίᾳ μάρτυρες—κ. τ. λ. The Epitomiser of Dion Cassius, on

It is not, however, so certain that the reign of Commodus was propitious to the Christians throughout, and yet Marcia certainly survived him. Theophilus, when, in the course of his argument on the superior antiquity of the Scriptures to that of any other writings, he recapitulates the chronology of the emperors of Rome, ends with the death of Marcus Aurelius. He therefore must have written under Commodus, his immediate successor; and yet his writings bear token that the Christians were not then in the enjoyment of uninterrupted peace. "The Greeks," says he, "dwell with pride on the memory of Homer, Hesiod, and the other poets; but the glory of the one incorruptible God they have not only forgot, but have impugned; for those who worship Him they have persecuted, *and daily do persecute;* those who openly insult Him they reward and honour; of such as have a zeal for virtue, and lead a life of holiness, they have stoned some and murdered some, and to *this hour they subject them to cruel tortures.*"[1] Neither is there wanting an example of the active working of this spirit. Eusebius, it is true, tells us that under Commodus the condition of the Christians was for a while improved, and that the Churches had rest throughout the world;[2] yet he proceeds to say that the devil would not allow this happy state of things to last, but brought to judgment one Apollonius, a Christian, a citizen of Rome, distinguished for learning and philosophy, and that though the accuser was put to death, for he was one of a class of men then very alert, common informers (Perennis, the unscrupulous minister of Commodus, passing sentence on him), still the Senate, in spite of the defence of himself and of the Christians in general, set up by Apollonius, con-

whose authority Gibbon writes, says of her—ἱστορεῖται δὲ αὕτη πολλά τε ὑπὲρ τῶν Χριστιανῶν σπουδάσαι, καὶ πολλὰ αὐτοὺς εὐεργετηκέναι. ἅτε καὶ παρὰ τῷ Κομμόδῳ πᾶν δυναμένη.

[1] Theophilus, iii. § 30.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 21.

demned him also to capital punishment under an ancient law, that Christians who were once put upon their trial were to recant or die.

It should seem, therefore, that, if the Christians fared somewhat better under Commodus than under his father, it arose from no particular tenderness for them on his side, but partly from his attention not being directed to names so humble as theirs—the senator being the mark for him, rather than the lowly follower of the cross; and partly from his being too much occupied with the pursuits of a voluptuary to have much leisure for those of a persecutor.

We now come to consider the condition of the Christians under Severus (A.D. 193), a subject of some perplexity.

It would appear that in the beginning of that Emperor's reign they were not molested. Possibly a cure wrought on him through the use of oil, by one Proculus, a Christian, whose good offices he requited by retaining him as an inmate in his palace till he died,[1] disposed him favourably towards the whole sect. But in the tenth year of his reign a change came over him, and such was the severity with which he now persecuted the Christians, that in their panic they began to imagine the reign of Antichrist to be at hand.[2] That the Emperor himself was chargeable with setting the persecution in motion, whoever else might give intensity to it and extend it, is certain. Eusebius expressly assigns it to him by name.[3] Moreover, the edict which he put forth against the Jews, but which comprised the Christians also, forbidding them to make proselytes under a severe penalty, further brought the persecution home to his own door;[4] more

[1] Tertullian, Ad Scap. § 4.
[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 7.
[3] Ibid. c. 1.
[4] Spartian. Vita Sever. c. 16, 17.

especially as that edict was probably confined in its operation, in the first instance, to Palestine, where the inhabitants had taken the part of Niger;[1] and though on strict construction it left those persons undisturbed who had declared themselves Christians already, yet it was evidently capable of great abuse, and the world full of adversaries ready to make the worst of it.

Nor was this all: a practice now began to introduce itself into the Church, which proved a great stimulant to persecution—that of purchasing from the magistrates, connivance at the profession of Christianity. As this was one of the serious and growing difficulties of the early Christians, the present may be the proper place for furnishing some account of it.[2]

The history of the Acts of the Apostles gives token of the first approach of the evil. Felix, we are told, still kept his hand on Paul, hoping that money might be given him of the Apostle, that he might loose him. For some time, however, the contemptuous indifference with which the Roman magistrates treated the Christians left no room for this abuse to take root, but by the date of Severus it had quite established itself; and Tertullian, whose Montanism had rendered him an ascetical moralist, does not fail to denounce it with great severity. In his Treatise concerning Flight in Persecution, he discusses the question how far it is lawful to buy off persecution, as though such practice was one of the stumbling-blocks of the day. He argues characteristically, that it is indecent to redeem with money the life which Christ had redeemed with his blood (§ 12); that the transaction is suspicious in itself, conducted as it is by means of the informer, the soldier, the wily magistrate; and, moreover, conducted clandestinely and by stealth; that it is not for

[1] Bishop Kaye's Tertullian, p. 53.

[2] Mosheim, De Rebus Christian. p. 453.

the rulers of the Church (and such, he intimates, shared in this stratagem, as indeed Cyprian expressly asserts) to exercise their authority under a licence to live purchased from the soldiery at the Saturnalia; that this could not be the kind of peace which Jesus meant to leave behind Him, when He returned to his Father (§ 13). Meanwhile, it would seem, according to this writer, that not individuals only stooped to this advice, but that whole Churches raised funds by contribution, for securing the members from molestation—funds, the possible amount of which may be conjectured, from the vast revenue Tertullian considers might be raised for the State, if each Christian were allowed to purchase the free exercise of his religion for a sum of money; but God, he thinks, had spared the Christians that humiliation, by not putting the scheme into the heart of the prince.[1]

No wonder, therefore, that with such stimulants to persecution, as the handling of these large sums, wrung from the fears of the Christians, supplied, persecutors should never be wanting; and that the severities which originated, perhaps, in the vindictiveness of the Emperor, should have been greatly aggravated by the cupidity of the magistrate.

Hitherto the transaction, as I have said, appears to have been altogether surreptitious, done "sub tunicâ," as Tertullian expresses it (De Fugâ, § 12). So common, however, did it become, and so profitable to the officials, that it seems soon to have assumed a systematic and organized form; the evasion the more elaborate and refined, as the measures for detecting the Christians from amongst the body of the population were the more precise and searching.

Thus far we have heard nothing of "Libelli;" documents which by Cyprian's time were of ordinary circula-

[1] Tertullian, De Fugâ in Persecutione, § 12.

tion, and which created amongst the Christians much embarrassment. When the magistrate issued an order, as he was empowered to do, that such and such persons, mentioned by name, should do sacrifice to the gods, and thus give proof that they were not Christians, it was not uncommon for a party so challenged, where conscious of the offence, to inform him through a common friend, that he was in truth a Christian, that it was not lawful for him to approach the altars of the gods, and that he was prepared to pay a fine to be excused; whereupon he received from the magistrate a libellus or certificate, by which the fact was asserted, directly or indirectly, that he had done sacrifice, and was accordingly exempt from the penalty of the law.[1] This seems to have been the real state of the case, for though an attempt has been made to qualify the guilt of the transaction, whatever the amount of it may be under the circumstances, by supposing that no actual affirmation of the Christian having done sacrifice was inserted in the libellus; that it was simply a form of which the Christian possessed himself, on the production of which he was safe, and of the real nature of which he asked no question; still it is evident from the language of Cyprian, that to have recourse to it was considered a sin. He even denounces the libellus as a "nefandus idololatriæ libellus" (Ep. l. p. 18), and the persons who took advantage of it as "persons who had defiled their consciences, and even rejected the name of Christian" (De Lapsis, p. 190). This phraseology of Cyprian is the more emphatic when the temper with which he treats the general question is taken into account; it being much more tolerant and compassionate than might have been expected of him. He is for making a distinction between the guilt of the Libellatici, those who had received certificates of having done sacri-

[1] Cyprian, Ep. lii. p. 70.

fice, and the Thurificati, those who had sacrificed actually and in fact; decreeing that the former, on their repentance, should be absolved, lest by overmuch severity they should be driven into heresy; but that the latter should experience the same lenity only in case of the prospect of their immediate death (Ep. lii.); whereas many ecclesiastical disciplinarians were for adopting a more rigorous rule, and in neither case make any concession.

Alas! this was one of those many cruel dilemmas in which the early Christians found themselves placed—the conscience pleaded on one side, and the natural love of life on the other; and it will rather become us to admire the stout heart of those who stood fast under such temptations, than upbraid the weakness of those who fell away. Such is a brief history of those Libelli.

To return to the subject of persecution under Severus. If it originated in Palestine (as the imperial edict, of which I have spoken, apparently confined in its operation to that country, renders probable), it speedily extended itself far and wide. "Throughout all the Churches, in every place," is the expression of Eusebius;[1] but in no part of the world did it rage more fiercely than in the region of Alexandria.

It is, perhaps, by taking this circumstance into account that we get one key to the obscure and mysterious works of Clemens Alexandrinus, who wrote about this time. He evidently composed under entire constraint; a constraint, no doubt, in a great measure arising from the character of the readers he was addressing, educated and fastidious heathens, whom he hoped to approach with better chance of success if he disguised the Christian teacher in the Philosopher, and Christianity in Philosophy. Still there appears to be a reserve in him even greater than this would explain. He speaks like one afraid to

[1] Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 1. Ἐν ἁπάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις κατὰ πάντα τόπον.

hear the sound of his own voice. Indeed, he almost says as much. "He suppresses many things," he tells us, "designedly, fearing to set down in writing what he would not venture even to utter aloud."[1] "He dares not write at full," says he once again, "lest he should be found casting pearls before swine, who would trample them under their feet, and then turn again and rend you."[2] The plan of his principal book (the Stromata) is desultory, confused, without system, expressly in order that the meaning of it should be deciphered with difficulty;[3] a scheme suggested, no doubt, as I have said, by the policy of making his approaches to his readers by stealth, and changing them into Christians whilst off their guard; but in some degree by the dangerous times in which his lot was cast, when he himself "saw daily before his very eyes abundant spectacles of martyrs burned, crucified, beheaded;"[4] their conviction effected by the ordinary test of a challenge to deny the Saviour.[5]

Of the many thousands who thus perished in Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, the names of a few persons have been preserved by Eusebius;[6] among them that of Leonides, the father of Origen, whose death for the truth may be well imagined to have kindled in the mind of his illustrious son, then a boy, that zeal for the Christian faith which had been deposited in him under the teaching of Clemens, and which animated him so powerfully as a man. Young as he was, he had the spirit to address a letter to his father, in prison, saying, "Take heed, my father, that you do not change your mind because of us."[7] Nor did he:—nor did he stand alone. There followed

[1] Stromat. i. § 1, p. 324.
[2] Ibid. § 12, p. 348.
[3] Μετὰ ἰδιώτος — Stromat. vi. § 1, p. 736.
[4] Stromat. ii, § 20, p. 494.
[5] Ibid. iv. § 6, p. 576.
[6] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 4.
[7] Ibid. c. 2.

him, in due course, during the same protracted persecution, several pupils of Origen (who had very early established himself as a teacher in the school where he himself had so lately sat at the feet of Clemens); and Plutarch, and Severus, and Heraclides, and Heron, and a second Severus, bore testimony, by their blood, to the powerful effect of his instructions.

Nor was this all. The fiery trial was not confined to the stronger sex—women fell under it also; and one Potamina, especially, by her faith and fortitude, calls forth the admiration and compassion of the historian. After the insults of the by-standers, the threats of the judge to consign her to the tender mercies of the gladiators, and the application of streams of boiling pitch to all parts of her body, she was at length committed to the flames; whilst many others, encouraged to make the same confession by the constancy of this distinguished martyr, whose vision appeared to them in their sleep, perished in the same visitation.

Some French writers, as Massuet, the Benedictine editor of Irenæus' works, have taken credit to France for possessing a very distinguished martyr of this date, in Irenæus, ascribing to him that honoured title, on the authority of an anonymous writer of the fourth or fifth century;[1] but as neither Tertullian nor Eusebius sets up any such claim in his behalf, and as at that period the name of martyr was most studiously annexed as a cognomen to any one who had a right to it,[2] we may safely conclude that Irenæus, whatever may have been his share of suffering, did not seal his faith with his blood; but was

[1] Dissert. Præv. in Irenæi Libros, xc.; Quæstiones ad Orthodoxos, cxv.

[2] See a remarkable instance of this in the Fragment of Polycrates, Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. c. 24.

allowed to bring his laborious life to its natural close, and, possibly, even before the persecution of Severus broke out.

Such, I think, appears to be the true character of the reign of Severus, with respect to the treatment of the Christians; the evidence I have adduced of his own cruel conduct towards them being positive and direct.

At the same time, there are passages in the writings of Tertullian, which it is difficult to reconcile with it, and which have induced Mosheim and others to take a more favourable view of this Emperor's feelings towards them, and to lay the blame of their persecution more entirely on the magistrates and subordinate officers of the empire, greedy after gain.

Certain it is, that Tertullian, who wrote during the life and after the death of Severus, seems to represent him as friendly to the Christians. In his Apology, he speaks of him as the most consistent of princes (§ 4), and yet the Apology gives ample token of a persecution prevailing at that very time. And if it should be said that this Treatise was composed at an early part of his reign, and before his severity had fully developed itself, yet in another, that "To Scapula," written, as may be conjectured from internal evidence, after the death of Severus, he still may be thought to speak of him in terms of commendation; actually enforcing on Scapula, a President of Africa, tenderness towards the Christians, by the example of Severus. "Even Severus himself" (ipse etiam Severus), says he, "was mindful of the Christians," and he illustrates this by his behaviour to Proculus, of which I have made mention; and by the fact that "he had honoured with his testimony certain very distinguished men, and very distinguished women, whom he knew to be of this sect"—and he adds (changing the

person), "he openly withstood the populace when raging against us" (in nos).[1]

This, it will be perceived, is very far from confirming the judgment we have been constrained to pass on Severus, basing it on the edict he uttered against the Christians, which his heathen biographer records, and which is a fact that cannot be disputed;[2] as well as on the express assertion of the Ecclesiastical Historian, who denounces him as an active persecutor, and produces his proof of it. It may be thought, however, that the testimony of Tertullian, for some reason or other, is to be received with some allowance on questions of this kind. It is observable, that he elsewhere speaks of Trajan foiling in some degree the execution of the severe laws against the Christians; and of Hadrian, Vespasian, Pius, Verus, never enforcing them[3]—assertions that require much qualification; it might be contended, perhaps, that the phrase "ipse etiam Severus" might imply, that admitting him to be a persecutor, and even a harsh one, he had, nevertheless, his relenting moods, which Scapula and his officers in general might do well to take pattern by; that Tertullian might have had some personal bias in favour of Severus, of which the cause is not known to us; that at any rate they were countrymen, both Africans, and that there might be something in this which drew them together; that, certainly, Tertullian speaks as if he had some knowledge of him and his affairs more than the common, witness what he says of Proculus, in connection with Severus, and of the Christian nurse which he tells us that Emperor gave to Caracalla, both of them incidents indicating an acquaintance with his domestic

[1] Tertullian, Ad Scapulam, § 4.

[2] Spartian. Vita Sever. c. 16, 17.

[3] Tertullian, Apol. § 5.

relations; and if we may suppose there was a significance in the change of person of which I before took notice, and that the phrase "in nos" was meant to apply to Tertullian himself, and not merely to Christians generally, we should have an express acknowledgment on his part of a personal obligation to Severus, which might very well influence his judgment of him in general.

CHAPTER XIV.

Condition of the Christians under Caracalla.—Heliogabalus.—Alexander Severus.—Maximinus.—Fierce Persecution under Decius. —Corruption of the Church described by Cyprian.—His Epistles.—Origen.—Interval of Tranquillity.—Deaths of Origen and Cyprian.—Advance of the Gospel.—Paul of Samosata.—Increased Prosperity of the Christians.—Corruption in the Church. —Diocletian Persecution.—Improvement and Advance of the Church.—Final Triumph under Constantine.

AFTER the sufferings of the Christians under Severus, which Gibbon describes as "an accidental tempest," they enjoyed, he tell us, "a calm of thirty-eight years"[1]—a period which would carry us to A.D. 249, or the beginning of the reign of Decius. This, however, requires qualification. Probably the persecution of the previous reign did not cease immediately on the accession of Caracalla, the son of Severus. Tertullian's Address to Scapula, a President of Africa, bears clear evidence of having been written, at any rate, after the death of Severus;[2] and I will add (as it contains allusions to the destruction of Byzantium, A.D. 196; to certain proceedings of Cincius Severus, a magistrate, who was executed A.D. 198;[3] and to an eclipse of the sun, thought to be the one A.D. 210: all of them incidents that occurred during the reign of Severus), evidence of having been written *shortly* after the death of that prince; or, in other words, in the reign of Caracalla.[4] And yet it appears from this Treatise,

[1] Gibbon, ii. p. 45.
[2] Tertullian, Ad Scapulam, § 4.
[3] Ibid. § 3.
[4] See Bishop Kaye's Tertullian, p. 56.

that persecution was then prevailing in Africa; the very object of this Treatise being to reduce it.

However, on the whole, this prince does not seem to have been unfriendly to the Christians; whether the Christian milk of his nurse, which flowed in his veins, tempered his pagan blood, or whether he spared them, actuated by motives which are beyond our discovery. Neither did they find an enemy in Heliogabalus, who followed him; whilst under Alexander Severus, symptoms of toleration begin to show themselves, which mark clearly enough, that the Christians had now assumed a higher social position, and had won for themselves a respectful consideration, to which they had hitherto been strangers. Lampridius, indeed, one of the writers of the Augustan History, who lived about the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century, has left it on record, that when the Christians had seized a plot of ground, and the Victuallers disputed it with them, Alexander decided for the Christians, saying, that it was better God should be worshipped there in any way, than that the Victuallers should get possession of it;[1] an incident which bespeaks the advance of the Christians, both in public and imperial estimation, to be so great, as to seem scarcely consistent with the state of the law, as I have represented it. For, so far from their religion appearing to be illegal, and the profession of it a capital offence, it is actually encouraged by the Emperor. Still, I believe the other to be the true view of the case; for severe persecution was still in store for the Christians in future reigns. Only their numbers had by this time become so considerable, their rank, in many cases, so imposing, and their character so unexceptionable, that the law was, in fact, almost neutralized; the execution of it unnatural. Indeed, with respect to the last particular,

[1] Lampridius in Alex. Severus, c. 49, p. 1003.

Origen expressly tells us, that the calumnies to which the Christians were once exposed were obsolete in his day.[1] And, accordingly, whereas some years before, they had found it necessary to assemble in secret, and had earned for themselves, from their enemies, the title of "Lucifugæ;" they had now acquired a footing in the State, which emboldened them to venture upon public worship, and, as it should seem, with more than impunity.

Other features of the reign of Alexander bespeak the same gradual tendency of Christianity to gain the ascendancy—betray the rising of the tide—mark that it was no longer struggling for sufferance, but for right; no longer for supercilious toleration, but for positive respect. Thus, we learn from his heathen biographer, whom I have already quoted, that he paid his devotions in a chapel, in which, amongst other figures, were those of *Christ*, Abraham, and Orpheus;[2] that he had a mind to build a temple to Christ;[3] that, in choosing governors of provinces, he adopted some of the precautions used by Christians in selecting their priests.[4] Whilst by Eusebius we are informed, that there were a good many Christians in the household of Alexander;[5] that Mamæa, his mother, to whose advice and direction he paid the greatest deference, was "a very religious woman, if ever there was one,"[6] an expression which a Christian bishop would scarcely have used, without meaning to represent her as a Christian, or, at least, as a searcher after the truth; especially as he adds, that when at Alexandria (where she had accompanied her son), she sent for Origen with honours, whose fame had reached her, to instruct her in

[1] Origen, Contra Cels. vi. § 27. 40.
[2] Lampridius, Alex. Severus, c. 29, p. 930.
[3] Ibid. c. 43.
[4] Lampridius, Alex. Severus, c. 45.
[5] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 28.
[6] Ibid. c. 21.

his doctrines; that he remained with her some time, showing her the things pertaining to the glory of the Lord, and was at length graciously dismissed. All of these, matters which afford further argument that Christianity was by this time mounting upwards, was touching the very throne; that the religion of the world was in a state of imminent transition; at present, indeed, presenting a strange combination of the Heathen and Christian systems, but destined speedily to precipitate the baser element, and to come forth pure and without alloy. Nor can we fail observing that the picture thus brought before us, precisely prepares us for that exhibited by the Apostolical Constitutions, which abound in provisions for a mixed population of Christian and Heathen thrown into the most intimate civic and social relations.

But though it thus appears that the Christians were more than safe under Alexander, and that his reign, so far as it goes, verifies the assertion of Gibbon, yet in the days of Maximinus, his successor, which fell within the period of tranquillity assigned to the Christians by that historian, the case was otherwise.

It is true that the persecution under this Emperor was limited to a particular class—the magnates of the Church, and apparently as having been the friends of Alexander; to whose death, as Maximinus had been instrumental, so was it natural that he should wage war against his followers and allies.[1] Accordingly, Gibbon takes advantage of this, and justifies his assertion of the pacific character of the reign of Maximinus, so far as the Christians were concerned, by considering the movement in this instance to be political, not religious; and the victims of his cruelty who happened to be Christians, to have been put to death, not as disciples of Christ, but as partisans of Alexander.[2] Probably, however, Maximinus acted from

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 28. [2] Gibbon, ii. p. 453.

mixed motives. The Christians, no doubt, felt that they had lost a most valuable support in Alexander, and as Maximinus, his successor, had the credit of his death, they were not likely, as a body, to bear him much good-will. Still Eusebius tells us, that he selected the leaders of the Churches for slaughter, as "being authors of the teaching according to the Gospel;" uses, moreover, the term persecution (διωγμὸς), when speaking of it, and intimates that this trouble lasted during the whole of the short reign of Maximinus.[1] Add to this, the Tract entitled "An Exhortation to Martyrdom," which Origen addressed at this time to Ambrosius and Protoctetus, indicates that such was the character of the visitation according to his notion of it also; the arguments he suggests in this Treatise all go on the supposition of the trial being one of the faith. He speaks of the sin of denying the faith, and of consenting to swear by the fortune of Cæsar;[2] he tells of the confession required of Christians who are Christians indeed; of the joy there is in suffering for righteousness' sake; of the voluntary nature of the act itself, which, in fact, gave martyrdom its merit;[3] and much more to the same effect; not an allusion to any political motive being at work, presenting itself from the beginning to the end of the dissertation.

The reigns of Balbinus, of Gordian, and of Philip, which extended over the last thirteen years of the thirty-eight, certainly appear to have been what Gibbon represents them—years of peace to the Church; Eusebius giving no intimation of the contrary: and the last of these Emperors affording some indications, like Alexander, of being himself almost, if not altogether, a Christian; as well as of the near approach of the day, when the Gospel would achieve its more complete temporal

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 28.
[2] Origen Exhort. § 7.
[3] Origen, Exhort. § 4, 5. 22.

triumph under Constantine, for reports now began to multiply of Emperors being Christians.[1] Of Philip, it was directly asserted that he was so; nay, even that he expressed a wish to share in the prayers of the Church; and that on the bishop requiring of him previous confession and penitence, he cheerfully submitted.[2] Certainly he, as well as his wife, Severa, had Origen for a correspondent; Eusebius having seen his letters to both of them.[3] Moreover, this same Father wrote his reply to Celsus, during Philip's reign;[4] and his Treatise bears internal evidence of having been composed in a season of perfect tranquillity, at least, to the Church. For, in answer to an objection of Celsus, that Christians were combined and held together mainly by fear of those without, Origen observes, that this could not be true; for that at the moment he was writing, all cause for fear had, by the will of God, long ceased; though it was not unlikely, Origen adds, that it would be renewed, seeing that the calumniators of the Christians imputed the troubles of the times to the multiplication of the Christians, in consequence of the magistrates not taking pains, as they once did, to crush them and put them down.[5] This conjecture of Origen's, we shall find, proved but too true. For in the next reign, that of Decius, one of the fiercest persecutions arose which history records, as though the evil Spirit was determined to put forth all his strength before yielding to an antagonist who was now discovered to be so really formidable.

At the same time we may, perhaps, see a cause why

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vii. c. 10.
[2] Ibid. vi. c. 34.
[3] Ibid. c. 36.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Origen, Contra Cels. iii. § 15. A note on this passage in the Benedict. Ed. of Origen, dates these troubles in the reign of Gordian, but Eusebius expressly ascribes the treatise against Celsus to the reign of Philip, vi. c. 36.

God should have permitted this affliction to return. The long tranquillity which the Church had enjoyed, whilst it had largely increased its numbers, had greatly debased its character. The good soldier of Jesus Christ, we are told, must endure hardness; and a Capua, it should seem, is even more fatal to him than to the carnal warrior. Especially would this be the case so long as he was living in the midst of idolators; and the infection of their example and society had constant opportunity of taking effect. We happen to possess a vivid picture of the Church of Africa, at this period, in the writings of Cyprian; and sad tokens it exhibits of the degeneracy of that portion of the Church Catholic. Though the number of the Christians was now very great,[1] and though many amongst them were of an affluent class,[2] so that at Rome, even Senators and knights, chief men and matrons, were found in their ranks;[3] and, accordingly, though living to themselves, and thereby escaping the pollution which followed from intercourse with the heathen, was now more practicable, we discover them resorting to heathen courts;[4] becoming members, as servants, of heathen households;[5] forming heathen marriages;[6] frequenting heathen spectacles, and even defending the practice (so relaxed, says Cyprian, had ecclesiastical discipline become), alleging that, in Scripture, Elijah is spoken of as the charioteer of Israel, and David represented as dancing before the Ark; that even there we read of harps, and cymbals, and pipes; that the Apostle talks of wrestling against spiritual wickedness, of running a race, of winning a crown; and that a Christian (such was the

[1] Cyprian, Ad Demetrianum, p. 221, "numerus et copiosus."

[2] See the whole Treatise, De Habitu Virginum.

[3] Ep. lxxxii.

[4] Testimon. adv. Judæos, iii. c. 44.

[5] Ibid. c. 72.

[6] De Lapsis, p. 183.

notable argument) might surely behold what Scripture describes.[1] Moreover, we find Christian women adorning themselves with the most costly decorations; virgins taking part in nuptial revels, and even resorting to baths frequented by both sexes;[2] bishops of the Church abandoning their chairs, deserting their people, wandering through distant provinces, hunting after gain, possessing themselves of funds by fraudulent means, and swelling their amount by usurious practices.[3] No wonder that God, whilst watching over his Church, should see fit to administer a sharp correction for abuses like these. Cyprian himself, who was in the midst of it, regards the persecution in this light.[4] No wonder that in a Church thus enervated great numbers should fall away.[5] No wonder that the purchasers of exemption from suffering, by bribing the magistrates to testify to a falsehood, should have multiplied exceedingly; and the Libellatici and Thurificati (of whom I have spoken already) should have become organized classes. And, I will add, no wonder that the merits of the martyrs—the faithful found among the faithless—should have been sung in terms of exaggeration, and dangerous pretensions should have been set up in their behalf.[6]

But though it is painful to recount the weaknesses of the Church, which persecution, coming after a long period of relaxing repose, discovered, it is cheering to turn to the other aspect of the subject, and contemplate the heroic fortitude with which it was met by many, probably by the great bulk of the Christians; and it is satisfactory that the same documents which furnish us with evidence

[1] Cyprian, De Spectac. p. 339.
[2] Ibid. De Habitu Virginum, pp. 177. 179.
[3] Ibid. p. 183.
[4] Cyprian, De Lapsis, p. 181.
[5] "Multiplex lamentanda jactura est."
[6] Cyprian, De Lapsis, p. 187.

of the humiliation of the Church, furnish also that of its triumph; their truth guaranteed by their ingenuousness.

With respect to the character and details of this persecution, the edict of Decius, which enjoined it, was to the effect, that the magistrates should apply to all suspected persons the test of sacrifice to the gods.[1] And so rigorously was this done, that it struck terror into the hearts of the Christians, who imagined that the time was now come, foretold by our Lord, when, if it were possible, even the very elect would fail. Accordingly, the prisons were filled with victims;[2] many died there of starvation,[3] in spite of large sums subscribed for their relief;[4] but which it was probably difficult to dispense, owing to the jealousy with which the approaches to them were watched.[5] Many were consigned to the mines,[6] or were carried off as slaves, by the Infidels, who now for the first time, in the neighbourhood of the Nile, received the appellation of Saracens.[7] Blandishments and threats were used by turns to shake their firmness.[8] Liberty and life offered on submission to plausible terms;[9] or death, aggravated by the shapes it assumed—all of them terrific, proposed as the alternative.[10] Others, and they in multitudes, betook themselves to mountains and deserts, where they perished by hunger and thirst, cold and disease, robbers and wild beasts.[11] Moreover, as the persecution was thus severe,

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. 41.
[2] Cyprian, Ep. lx.
[3] Ibid. Ep. xxi.
[4] Ibid. Ep. lx., xxxvii.
[5] Ibid. Ep. iv.
[6] Bp. Andrews, whose prayers are founded very much on the old Liturgies, has amongst his Petitions,—Μνήσθητι Κύριε τῶν ἐν μετάλλοις, p. 62, 12mo.
[7] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 42. Πολλοὶ δὲ οἱ κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ Ἀραβικὸν ὅρος ἐξανδροποδισθέντες ὑπὸ βαρβάρων Σαρακηνῶν. It is a quotation from Dionysius, made by Eusebius.
[8] Cyprian, Ep. viii.
[9] Ibid. Ep. xv.
[10] Ibid. De Lapsis, p. 185; De Glareâ Martyrii, p. 347.
[11] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 42.

so was it wide-spreading, or even universal. We discover its ravages at Rome, in Palestine, at Antioch;[1] at Alexandria,[2] at Carthage, and in the neighbouring district.[3] And not in cities only, but even in country places and villages.[4] Indeed, there was for a long time no road, no lane, no alley, where the Christians could walk by night or by day, without being challenged to utter the accursed words, and, on their refusal, were committed to the flames.[5]

The names of many of the victims of this fierce aggression are preserved in the records of the day, together with the several circumstances of their confession or martyrdom; women and boys, aged persons and rulers of the Church, amongst the number. Suffice it to mention two of this latter class—Cyprian and Origen. Cyprian, it is true, did not actually seal his faith with his blood till a somewhat later date, but he was driven into concealment during this tyranny; and from his retreat, where he continued two years,[6] he addressed those letters to his diocese, and elsewhere, which serve to throw so much light on the doctrine and discipline of the Primitive Church; so that, under God's providence, the very means which were taken to root it out of the earth, supplied to future ages that precious deposit—a complete portrait of it. For it may be well supposed that, his hiding-place lying within a distance of his people near enough to admit of his being consulted by them on all occasions, Cyprian would be called on to give expression to his sentiments, and in writing too, on every manner of ecclesiastical contingency; and that thus, questions touching the election of the clergy, rules of ordination, episcopal jurisdiction

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 39.
[2] Ibid. c. 41.
[3] Ibid. c. 42.
[4] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 42.
[5] Ibid. c. 41.
[6] Cyprian, Ep. lii.

and discipline, practical difficulties in the working of the Early Church, and the methods by which they were to be met, would all in their turn be brought before us (as they are in fact), confirming the authority of the traditions and customs of our own day, by establishing their existence even in times so remote as this Bishop of Carthage.

On the death of Decius, Cyprian quitted his retreat, and returned to his diocese; his martyrdom postponed, though only for a short season. Neither does Origen seem actually to have expired whilst that Emperor was alive, for though put to the torture, at Cæsarea, under Decius, his sufferings were protracted till the persecutor himself was first taken to his account. Buried in the depths of his prison, his neck made fast in the collar, and his body stretched on the rack, hole by hole and day after day, he breathed his last immediately on Gallus ascending the throne, in the seventieth year of his age.[1]

Few Fathers of the Early Church are so difficult to appreciate as Origen, and yet none, of the first three centuries at least, have left us writings so abundant, from which to form a judgment of the author. But those writings are to be read with caution and discrimination. Some of them are, no doubt, in every respect trustworthy, carefully composed, and, on the whole well preserved. Such, for instance, is his Treatise against Celsus, perhaps the most valuable of the whole. But of some we have the Latin translation only, a few fragments of the original Greek text being all that is left of it, and that a translation confessedly unfaithful; Rufinus, who made it, expressly declaring, that portions he had abridged for the sake of brevity; and portions containing sentiments from which he dissented, or which were contrary to others advanced by Origen elsewhere, he suppressed, on the plea

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 39; vii. c. 1.

that they were interpolations.[1] Others of them were written in haste, for the occasion, when the writer was perhaps on the move, and had no time for much study or research.[2] Others, whatever they might be when they first came from his hands, were adulterated even in his lifetime. Others were simply extempore disputations, taken down by ready writers, a slovenly method of communicating one's thoughts to the world, at best; and, in the instance of Origen, rendered worse by the trick the Heretics had of dressing up such documents to their own taste, and so putting them in circulation, and by Origen's own negligent custody of his manuscripts, which made such frauds the more easy. Add to all this the general complexion of the works themselves, a circumstance which greatly augments the difficulty of deciphering the man by means of them; the allegories with which they abound, so far from perspicuous;[3] the speculations into which they wander, so many and so mysterious—and no wonder, for many theological questions then really admitted of debate, tradition and conference not having as yet narrowed them; and still more were suggested by the active imaginations of swarms of heretics and philosophers, with whom he was brought into contact by the celebrity of his name[4]—speculations which Origen himself characterises as doubtful, as hazardous, even as daring; and for which he perpetually offers apologies.[5]

But the true key to the ambiguity of the writings of Origen, both as to the genuineness of the text, the precision of the meaning, and the consistency of the character, is the fact that they must have been, to a very great

[1] Origen, De Principiis, lib. iii.; Præfatio Rufini, vol. i. p. 107, Benedict. Ed.

[2] See vol. i. p. 12; Ep. ad Africanum.

[3] See περὶ εὐχῆς, § 26, vol. i. p. 241.

[4] Origen, De Principiis, i. p. 4.

[5] Ibid. b. i. c. vi. § 1; c. vii. § 2; b. ii. c. vi. § 2. 6; c. viii. § 4; b. iii. c. iv. § 5.

extent, the substance of oral lectures, which he delivered as a catechist, whether *inter ambulandum*, or in his two distinguished schools at Alexandria and Cæsarea. Thus would his thoughts be often merely the suggestions of the moment, and if afterwards committed to writing by himself, would still bear the impression of the circumstances under which they were expressed; or if recorded by some admiring hearer, be probably still further debased by the errors of a second hand; or in some instances, perhaps, altogether abused, by spurious documents being put forth under this great author's name, not easily disproved, when it was notorious that he had made the delivery of lectures the business of a long life.

The perplexity which attaches to his writings, attends also the chief incidents of his history; and the motives which weighed with him to govern his school at Alexandria, under the episcopate of Demetrius, without the advantage of Holy Orders; acquiescing, as it should seem, in the reluctance of that bishop to confer them under his peculiar circumstances;[1] and yet, whilst he was still under his jurisdiction, seeking them, or at least, accepting them at the hands of the bishops of Palestine — probably breaking a primitive Canon of the Church, and certainly involving the bishops of the two countries in contention on his account,[2]—seem strange and unaccountable. Eusebius, indeed, imputes the subsequent conduct of Demetrius towards Origen, in denouncing him to the bishops throughout the world, and apparently making Alexandria too hot to hold him—for he removed to Cæsarea[3]—to mere jealousy of a man more illustrious than himself. Yet it may be remarked, that after the death of Demetrius, neither Heraclas, his successor in the see of Alex-

[1] See the Apostolical Canons, b. viii. 21-24, and Bp. Beveridge's Notes on them; Patres Apostolici, i. p. 464, Cotelerius.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. c. 8.

[3] See Ibid. c. 26.

andria, and a pupil of Origen's besides, nor yet Dionysius, the successor of Heraclas, and another of his pupils, appears to have made any efforts to recall him,[1] as though there was something still cleaving to Origen, which made even his friends in the Church slow to avail themselves of his abilities and his fame.

The interval which elapsed from the death of Decius (A.D. 252) to the middle of the reign of Diocletian, an interval of some forty years, Gibbon represents as one of prosperity to the Churches; interrupted, if at all, only by certain hostile intentions attributed to Aurelian.[2] On the whole, it no doubt was a period of peace to the Church, though, as in a former case, when that author made a similar assertion, after his manner, some exceptions are to be taken against its perfect accuracy. Thus Origen, we have seen, suffered under Gallus, who is also said by Dionysius, a contemporary authority preserved by Eusebius,[3] to have persecuted "the holy men who prayed for his peace and safety" (*i. e.* the Christians, or possibly only the clergy of that body), though perhaps not to the death.[4] And the fact itself, as well as the limitation of it, seems confirmed by Cyprian, who, in several of his letters written about this time, speaks as if uneasy at the condition of the Church, rather than as if under actual suffering. He has visions that the enemy is at hand;[5] he sees Antichrist approaching;[6] he hears his own name proclaimed in the circus, and clamours raised for his being cast to the lions.[7] But it is to be observed, that this last outrage occurred on the occasion of offering a sacrifice enjoined at the time, probably on account of a pestilence

[1] See Evans's Biography of the Early Church, Second Series, p. 58.
[2] Gibbon, ii. p. 456.
[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. viii. c. 1.
[4] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vii. c. 1.—Ἤλασεν.
[5] Cyprian, Ep. 54.
[6] Ibid. Ep. 55.
[7] Ibid.

then prevailing (A.D. 252). And as it was the popular belief that such visitations were sent as manifestations of the wrath of the gods against the Christians,[1] a delusion which Cyprian expressly combats in his address to Demetrianus, now put forth, it would seem that it was rather the accident of the moment that prompted the outbreak, than any deliberate edict of persecution then promulgated, especially as Cyprian, however disturbed, evidently took no substantial harm himself, and makes no mention of any other who had. It is, however, a bold figure of speech to construe precarious permission to live, into a state of prosperity.

Thus again, Valerianus cannot be said to have been a peaceful ruler with reference to the Christians, during the *whole* period of his reign; the conclusion of it not fulfilling the promise of the beginning. Indeed, it was under him that Cyprian died the martyr's death—a case in itself enough to afford a contradiction to Gibbon's too unqualified statement, and which reduces him to the necessity, in order to maintain his consistency, of attempting to lead the attention away from the atrocity of the act itself, to certain petty circumstances of decorum which accompanied it. It was nothing to seize an innocent man and take away his head, provided the execution was not attended by every aggravation of ignominy and pain of which it was capable; provided he was conveyed, not to a prison, but to a private house, and had an elegant supper prepared for him before he was led to the scaffold; the "prosperity" of Christians, it should seem, consisting in being slain with civility.

We have not, however, to rest the proof of persecution under Valerian on the single case of Cyprian. Dionysius, a contemporary, to whom I have referred already, speaks of the Christians, in Egypt at least, as forbidden

[1] Cyprian, Ep. 55.

to hold assemblies; and as driven into exile, if they persisted, to desolate districts, where, however, they seized the opportunity of extending the knowledge of God to parts which it had not yet penetrated; of others of the Christian body suffering bonds and imprisonment; being scourged, committed to the flames, slain by the sword, and of the danger which attended the gathering their remains and consigning them to the earth.[1] Nay, more—of its being commonly believed that in this Emperor was realised the "Beast" of the Revelation (xiii. 5), "to whom power was given to continue for forty and two months;"[2] the persecution having lasted just that time—three years and a half. It is true, that in these proceedings Valerian seems to have acted at the instigation of another, one Macrianus, the chief of the Egyptian Magi, who had acquired a dangerous influence over him (but that does not alter the fact); and that on his son and colleague, Gallienus, succeeding to the sole possession of the imperial throne, the plague was stayed, a proclamation of toleration and amnesty being then issued by him "throughout the world:"—the range of that proclamation, by the way, seeming to argue, that the troubles it was intended to put an end to had not been confined to Egypt and Palestine.[3] At the same time, such was the anomalous condition of the Christians—their present importance extorting from the heathen, in spite of themselves, respect and forbearance, and yet the original laws against them still in force, if malice happened to provoke an enemy to avail himself of them—such, I say, was their anomalous condition—such the balance of the Christian and Heathen party at this season, that in spite of the humane edict of the Emperor himself, a private individual was in circumstances to

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vii. c. 11.
[2] Ibid. c. 10.
[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vii. c. 13.

defeat it; and we learn from Eusebius, that at this very moment, a certain soldier of Cæsarea, Marinus by name, being entitled to promotion by order of succession, was challenged by a rival as disqualified for it, by being a Christian, and refusing to sacrifice to the Emperors; that in support of his objection, he appealed to the old laws; that Achæus, the magistrate of the place, whose business it was to investigate such matters, questioned Marinus, and found from his own lips that a Christian he was; that he granted him three hours for reflection; that Theotechnus, the bishop, availed himself of this interval, led Marinus to the Church, set him within the precincts of the altar, pointed first to the sword with which he was girt, and then to a copy of the Gospels[1] (perhaps lying on the altar), and bid him choose between them; that on Marinus stretching forth his hand, and taking the book, Theotechnus said to him, "Lay hold then, lay hold of God, and in his strength may that be thine which thou hast chosen. Go in peace;" that then, the time being expired, the herald claimed him; when, standing once more at the judgment seat, and affirming his faith even with more alacrity than at the first, he was led away to execution just as he was, and was crowned a martyr.[2]—A strange concurrence of circumstances, only to be explained, as I have said, by the struggle that was going on between the Heathen and the Christians for the mastery. The edict of the Emperor on the one side, the law of the land, as yet unrepealed, on the other; here a bishop with his Church, altar, copy of the Scriptures forthcoming; there a secular court, with its judge and officers, working in an opposite direction; and both openly.

I notice these symptoms of the transitional state of religion, the rather, because they prove that the Gospel did not, as I have already remarked repeatedly, and shall

[1] Τὴν τῶν θείων εὐαγγελίων γραφήν. | [2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vii. c. 15.

have to remark again, spring into life with Constantine, and under the encouragement of the powers of this world, but was first feeling and then forcing its way gradually, though still continually on the advance, during a series of reigns, and under a variety of circumstances, adverse or propitious, till the accession of that prince to independent rule, when the consummation in the natural course of things was achieved; the sail which for awhile had been fluttering and uncertain, swung over, filled with the wind, and thenceforth held its course steady and undisturbed.

Little is to be objected to Gibbon's statement, with respect to the reign of Aurelian. In spite of his being a zealous heathen himself (I mean Aurelian), and having himself, as it should seem,[1] some contempt for the Christians, he left them unmolested during the greater part of his reign. Indeed, his conduct in the case of Paul of Samosata has been thought to indicate even more than this; an apparent leaning to their side. The history is a remarkable one. So confident in his position as Bishop of Antioch did Paul feel, that he took upon himself to exact from the brethren, and appropriate to his own purposes, large sums of money; carried himself with great pomp and pretension in the public streets; was attended by a retinue of people preceding and following him; caused a throne to be erected for himself in his Church, in emulation of that of the civil magistrate; insisted on his congregation applauding him when he spoke, as though they were in a theatre—improprieties which, in addition to his teaching unsound doctrine on the subject of the Second Person of the Trinity, drew on him the displeasure of a conclave of bishops who deposed him, and elected one Domnus, bishop in his stead. Mean-

[1] Vopiscus in Aureliano, c. xx. tom. ii.; see Mosheim, De Rebus Christianis, p. 559.

while, Paul refused to give up possession of the church buildings, and appealed to Aurelian, who, however, confirmed the judgment of the bishops, and dislodged him;[1] a transaction, it must be allowed, indicating in a very decisive manner, the recognition of the Christians by the chief magistrate, as a community possessing rights and property, and established, *de facto*, if not *de jure*, in an attitude of strength.

Thus did Aurelian behave himself towards the Christians for several years. At the close, however, of his short reign, and under the influence of certain sinister advisers, whether the philosophers or the priests, he changed his views, and was, at all events, preparing the persecution of them, if not actually engaged in it, when he was arrested by the sword of the conspirator, and the Christians fell at once upon friendly times.[2] They were allowed to avow their faith openly, and without reserve; they were received as inmates into the imperial palaces; they were courted by the governors of provinces; they were, in some instances, appointed governors themselves; they reared, without hindrance, spacious churches in every city, the older ones no longer sufficing for the multitudes who now resorted to them; and everything bespoke that the violent were on the point of taking the Kingdom of Heaven by force.

But, once more, they who knew how to bear injuries and wrongs, were not proof against ease and honours; and the same declension of morals, the result of years of tranquillity which preceded the reign of Decius, and which had to be visited with correction by the heavy hand of that destroyer, again discovered itself, and was destined to be submitted to similar discipline. Licence had begot contention and disorder, Christians had become jealous of Christians, prelates were at strife with prelates.

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vii. c. 30. | [2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. viii. c. 1.

Sloth, dissimulation, and hypocrisy, were infecting the Church, when the avenger again arose in the person of Diocletian; and, more especially in that of each of his colleagues or immediate successors, Maximian, Galerius, Maximinus, and Maxentius. For though the title of this dreadful persecution, which lasted for some ten years, is known by the name of Diocletian, that Emperor was far from being the sole, or even the most active author of it. It was not till the nineteenth year of his reign, that it became fierce and general. Edict after edict was now put forth, the results of which Eusebius witnessed with his own eyes, and has left them on record, as an everlasting monument of the determined manner in which the heathen spirit struggled for supremacy to the last. First, the churches were to be levelled to the foundations; copies of the Scriptures and service books[1] were to be committed to the flames; persons in office were to be dismissed; slaves to be denied all hope of freedom.[2] Presently, the bishops were to be proceeded against; and then the people at large, and in all quarters.

The details of these sanguinary scenes are given by Eusebius[3] at great length, and frequently with the names of the parties concerned in them. Gibbon, however, impugns his honesty.[4] But it must be observed, that it is actually the candour of the Ecclesiastical Historian himself, which furnishes his accuser with all the materials he has for the charge; and if Eusebius had not frankly avowed the plan of this part of the work to be, to record the things which make for the glory of the Church and not for its disgrace, to select for description the deeds of those who stood

[1] Τὰς δὲ ἐνθέους καὶ ἱερὰς γραφάς.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. viii. c. 2, 3; see also Mosheim, De Rebus Christianis, p. 925.

[3] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. viii., and his Book of the Martyrs of Palestine.

[4] Decline and Fall, ii. p. 493, Milman's Ed.

fast rather than of those who fell away, which many did—the heroic scenes which attended and followed the persecution, rather than the inglorious dissensions and follies of the Christians which preceded it;[1]—if Eusebius, I say, had not openly avowed such to be the plan of this part of his work, contending that it was the most profitable mode of treating his subject, both for his contemporaries and for posterity, and even most accordant with Scripture, which prescribes that, "if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, we should think of these things,"—Gibbon would not have had the plea for his attack. But while the ingenuous confession of Eusebius shows that he had no misgivings as to the truth and fidelity of the narrative he supplies (a narrative relating to his own times), and that he felt he could afford to avow his method of proceeding and his reason for it, open as it was to animadversion, the minute and persevering artifice with which Gibbon casts the whole of this portion of his history to the disparagement of the martyr and dishonour to the Church, serves to show how utterly disqualified he was to do justice to the motives of the Church's Historian.

I shall spare my readers the details of this long and bloody persecution, and rather employ myself in directing their attention to the fresh facts which now transpire, indicating, even in the midst of successful assaults upon the Gospel for a season, the near approach of its final and complete ascendancy; and I revert to this subject again and again as I proceed, in order to demonstrate the utter unsoundness of the sceptical theory, that Christianity owed its establishment to its recognition by the State; the truth manifestly being, that the development of its force was progressive, and that the State did not give it its countenance till it could no longer withhold it.

[1] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. viii. c. 2, and the Martyrs of Palestine.

Thus the sentiments of the several Emperors themselves—for several there were—were now divided: some holding with the Christians, and some with the heathen; Maximian and Galerius bent on persecution; Diocletian in part, Constantius (the father of Constantine) altogether, opposed to it; as in turn, Maximian, Maxentius, and Constantine were at variance with each other in the same way: the first two the foes of the Christians, the last their steadfast friend. Nor was this all: the wives of some of the parties had views of their own, and complicated still more the subject of religion by differing from their husbands. Thus, whilst Diocletian himself was a worshipper of the gods of his fathers, Prisca had renounced them, and was a Christian; and whilst Galerius was not only a heathen, but a fierce persecutor of the Christians, Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian and Prisca, followed her mother's example, and was a disciple of Christ.[1]

Again, Maxentius, a son of Maximinian, another of the Emperors who had established himself during the ten years' persecution, is seen to be so impressed with the growing power and popularity of the Christians, that, though a licentious heathen, and eventually a fierce enemy of the Christians, he pretended (ὑπεκρίνατο), in the early part of his career, to be a Christian himself, expressly with a view to winning the favour of the Roman people.[2] And if to all this we add the penitential edict of Galerius, when, smitten with a mortal disease, he bethought himself of his past cruelties to the Christians, and gave orders that the persecution should be stopped, and they be permitted to rebuild their churches, and offer up their devotions without restraint, provided only they would pray for his welfare, and that of his subjects, it becomes manifest that the empire was ripe for the ac-

[1] See Mosheim, De Rebus Christianis, p. 913.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. viii. c. 14.

knowledgment of Christianity as the religion of the State; that God—though his judgments were above, far out of the sight of men—had made all his preparations for this great crisis; that nothing was wanting but the last hand; when—the other emperors being by degrees disposed of, and, with them, all further impediments—that hand was put to the work—Constantine was left alone on the stage to do his pleasure, and about the year 324, the triumph of the Cross was complete.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ROMAN EMPERORS

TO THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE.

A.D.	
13.	Tiberius.
37.	Caligula.
41.	Claudius.
54.	Nero.
68.	Galba.
69.	Otho.
69.	Vitellius.
69.	Vespasian.
79.	Titus.
81.	Domitian.
96.	Nerva.
98.	Trajan.
117.	Hadrian.
138.	Antoninus Pius.
161.	Marcus Aurelius.
180.	Commodus.
192.	Pertinax.
193.	Julianus.
193.	Septimus Severus.
211.	Caracalla.
217.	Macrinus.
218.	Heliogabalus.
222.	Alexander Severus.
235.	Maximinus.
238.	Gordian.
244.	Philip.
249.	Decius.
251.	Gallus.
253.	Valerian.
259.	Gallienus.
268.	Claudius.
270.	Aurelian.
275.	Tacitus.
276.	Florianus.
276.	Probus.
282.	Carus.
284.	Diocletian.
286.	Diocletian and Maximianus.
305.	Constantius and Galerius.
306.	Constantine.

A LIST OF ECCLESIASTICAL WRITERS

TO THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE WHOSE WORKS ARE NOW EXTANT.

	A.D.
Clement, Bishop of Rome, died about	100
Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, suffered martyrdom	107
Justin Martyr suffered martyrdom at Rome about	165
Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, suffered martyrdom about	167
Tatian wrote his book against the Gentiles about	176
Hermias wrote his Satire against the Heathen Philosophers about	177
Athenagoras wrote his Apology and Treatise on the Resurrection about	177
Hegesippus,* of whose History only fragments remain, died about	180
Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, addressed his Treatise to Autolycus: died about	180
Irenæus wrote five Books against Heresies about	190
Minutius Felix wrote his Octavius about	207
Hippolytus flourished about	214
Clement of Alexandria died about	217
Tertullian died about	220
Origen died about	254
Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, suffered martyrdom	258
Gregory (Thaumaturgus) Bishop of Neocæsarea, died about	265
Arnobius wrote seven Books against the Gentiles	290
Methodius, Bishop of Tyre, suffered martyrdom about	307
Pamphilus of Cæsarea suffered martyrdom about	309
Lactantius died about	325
Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, died	340

* See Routh's Reliquiæ Sacræ, which contains a collection of the fragmentary writings of the Christian authors of the second and third centuries.

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